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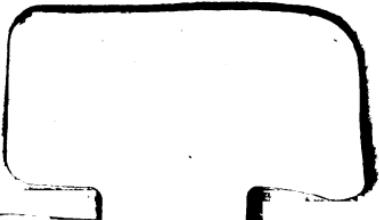
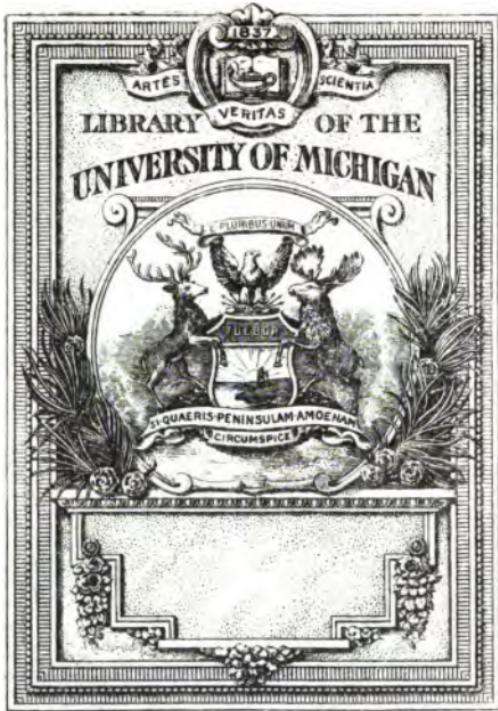
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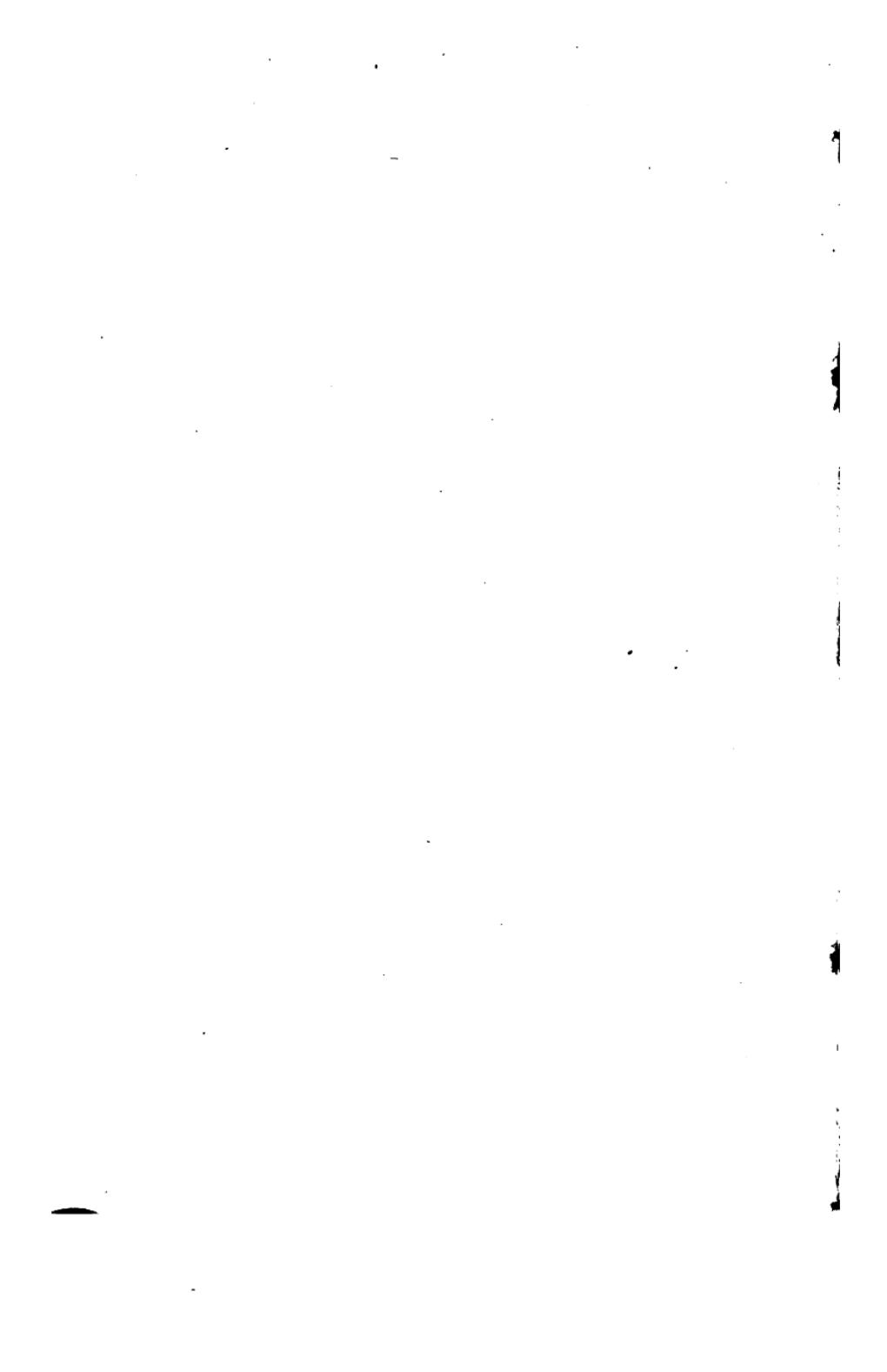
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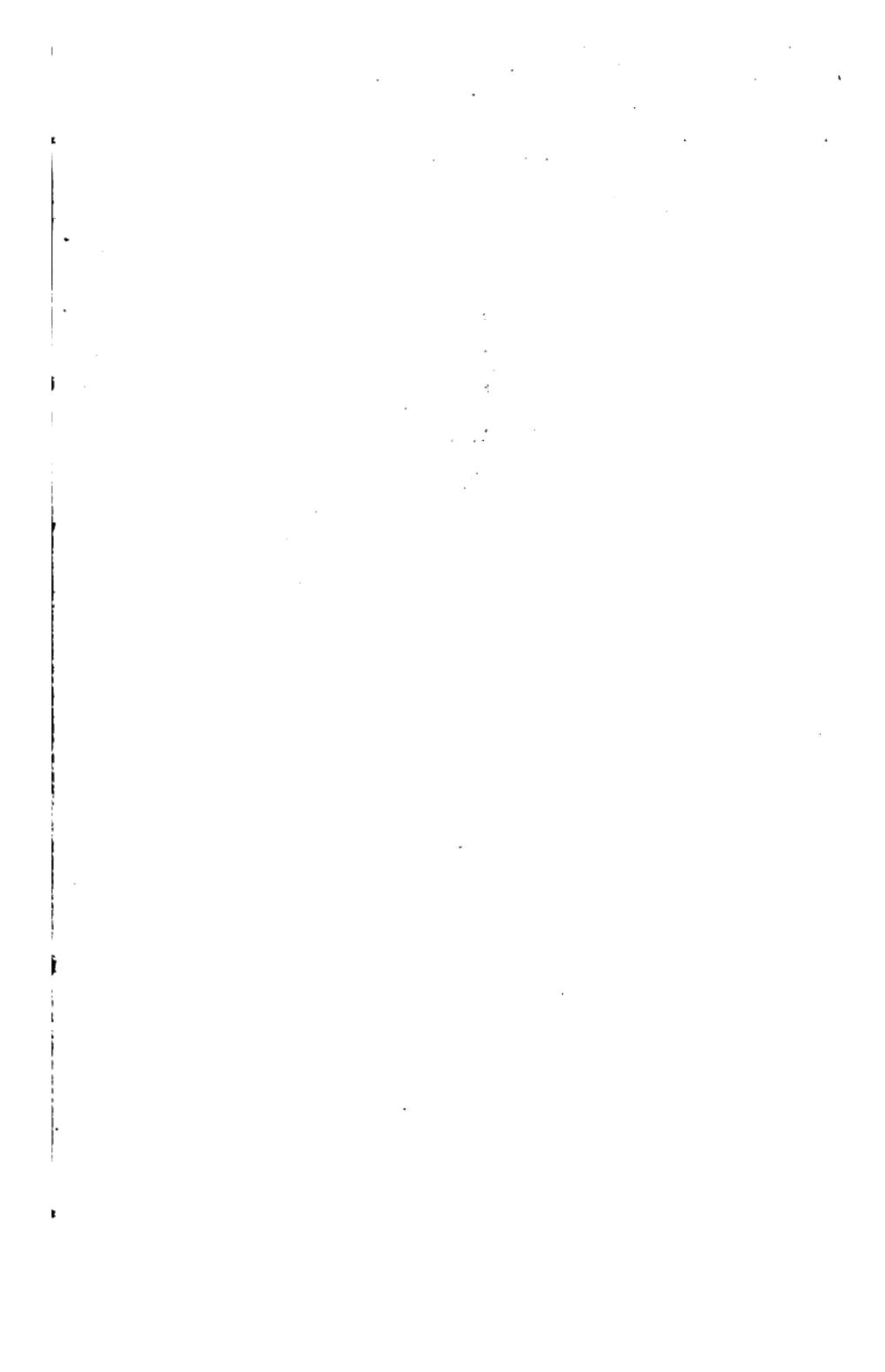
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Songs of the Sioux
And Other Poems.

11.152



By
Will Chamberlain.



**Songs of the Sioux
And Other Poems.**



**By
Will Chamberlain.**

*Copyright 1901
By the Author.*

" Deep in the heart of the painter
His holiest art lies unbidden,
Back of the song of the singer
The soul of the poet is hidden."

To the near and dear ones, to neighbors,
publishers; and to well-wishers whom I have
not met in the flesh: to all of these, and all
others to whom this book may come as a greet-
ing, it is respectfully inscribed by

THE AUTHOR.

Press of
THE DAKOTA REPUBLICAN,
Vermillion, S. D.

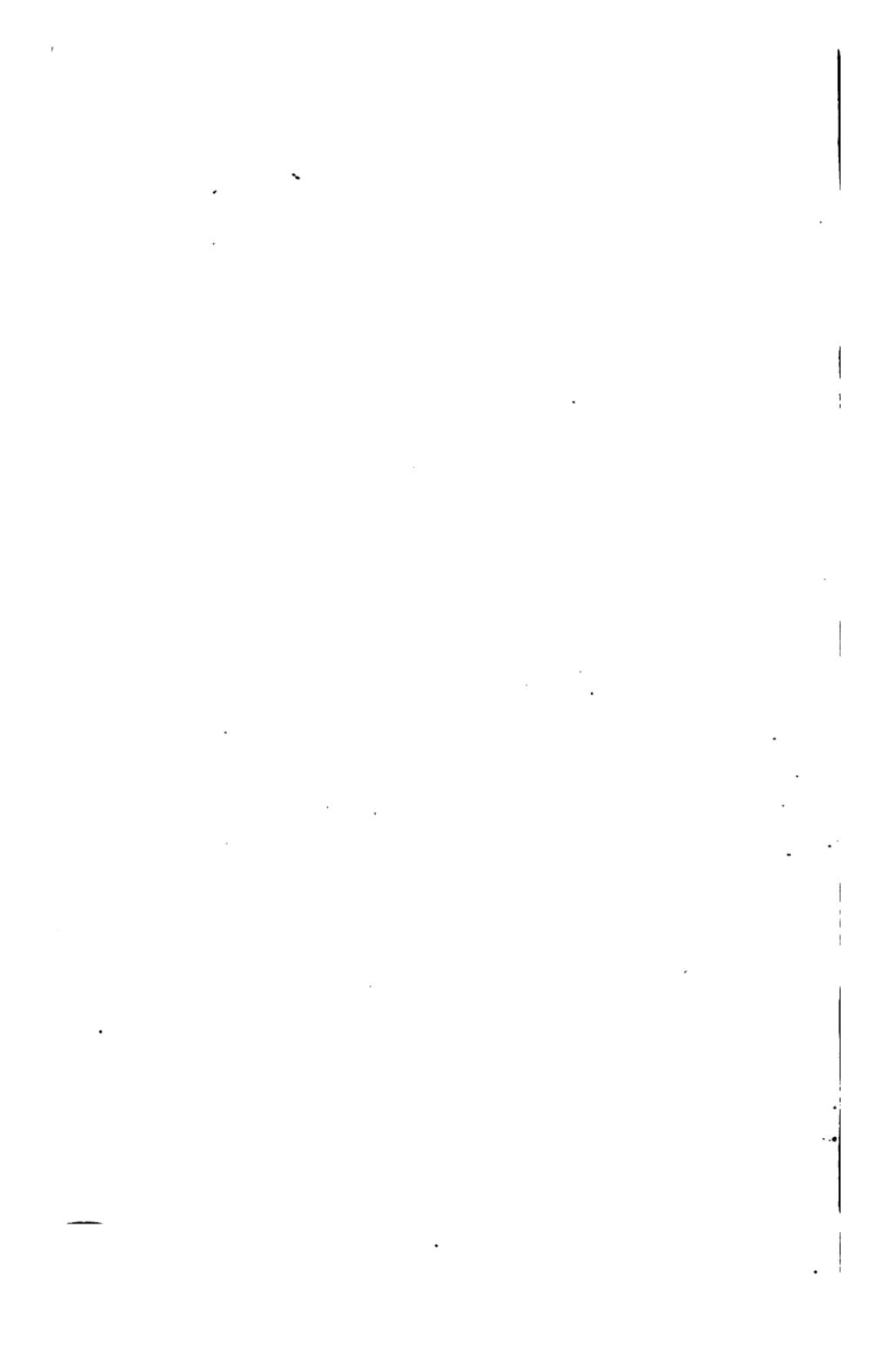
PREFACE.

“ Ships that pass in the night
And speak each other in passing.—
Only a signal shown, only a wafted greeting,
Then darkness again and a silence.”

IN sending forth this little book, the author has mainly two objects in view. One of these is to see the humble waifs of his pen brought together and given more permanent form. There is a sense of pleasure in calling as it were these children home from the corners of periodicals, and dressing them up in new garments. The second object of the publication is to remind our vigorous and increasing population of some of the more immaterial phases of life on every hand. Flesh and bone decay, but the spirit, the dream, the fancy, live forever. My humble desire has been in the past, and is here, to encourage the better natures of men—to divert, in passing, the thought from ambition wholly sordid, and open the way in a small degree for those inexpressible ideals so close to every hopeful heart.

If in “ Songs of the Sioux ” you come to see beauties of river and prairie not before noted, the work of composition and the expense of publication will have been repaid.

W. P. C.



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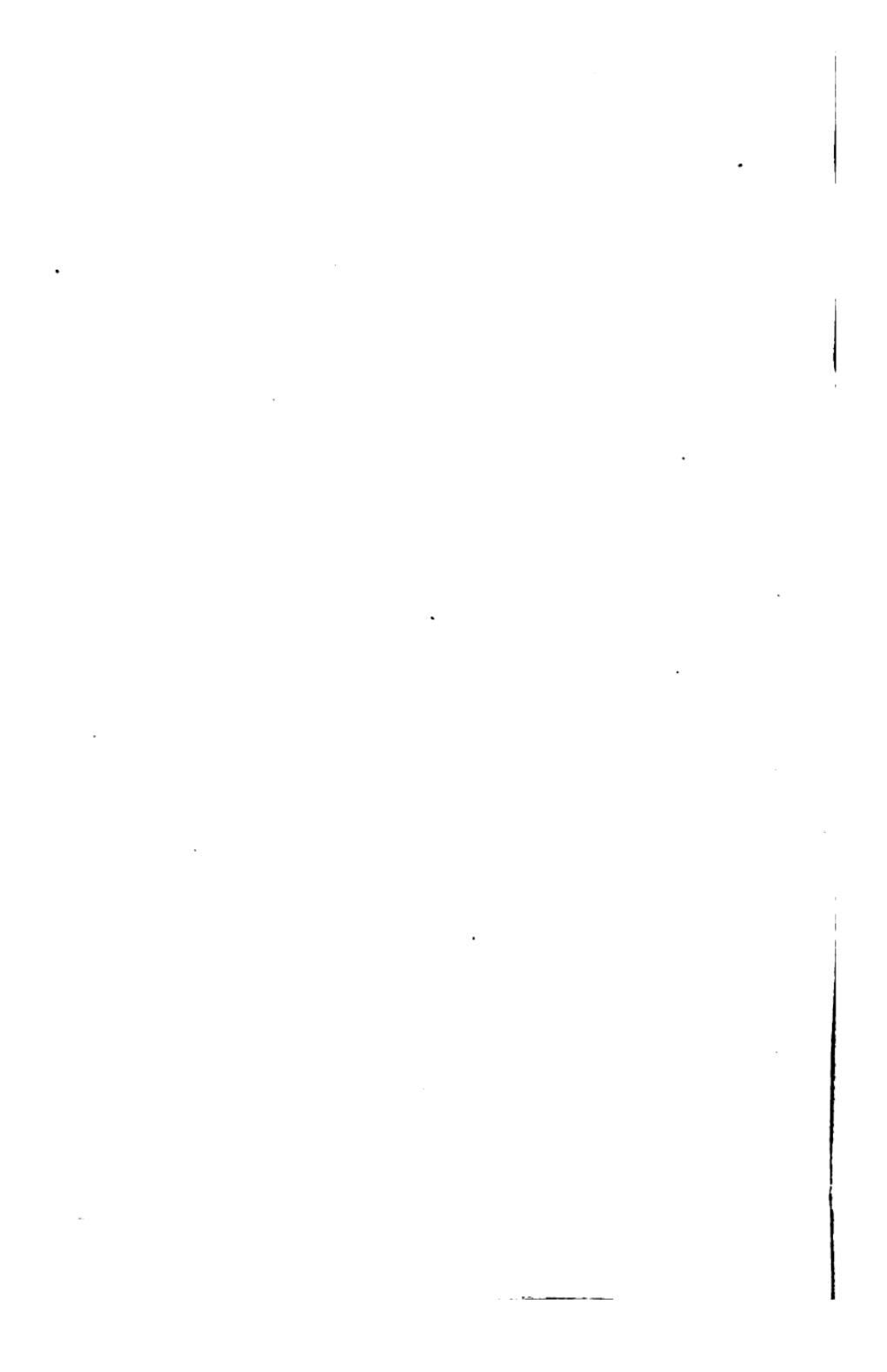
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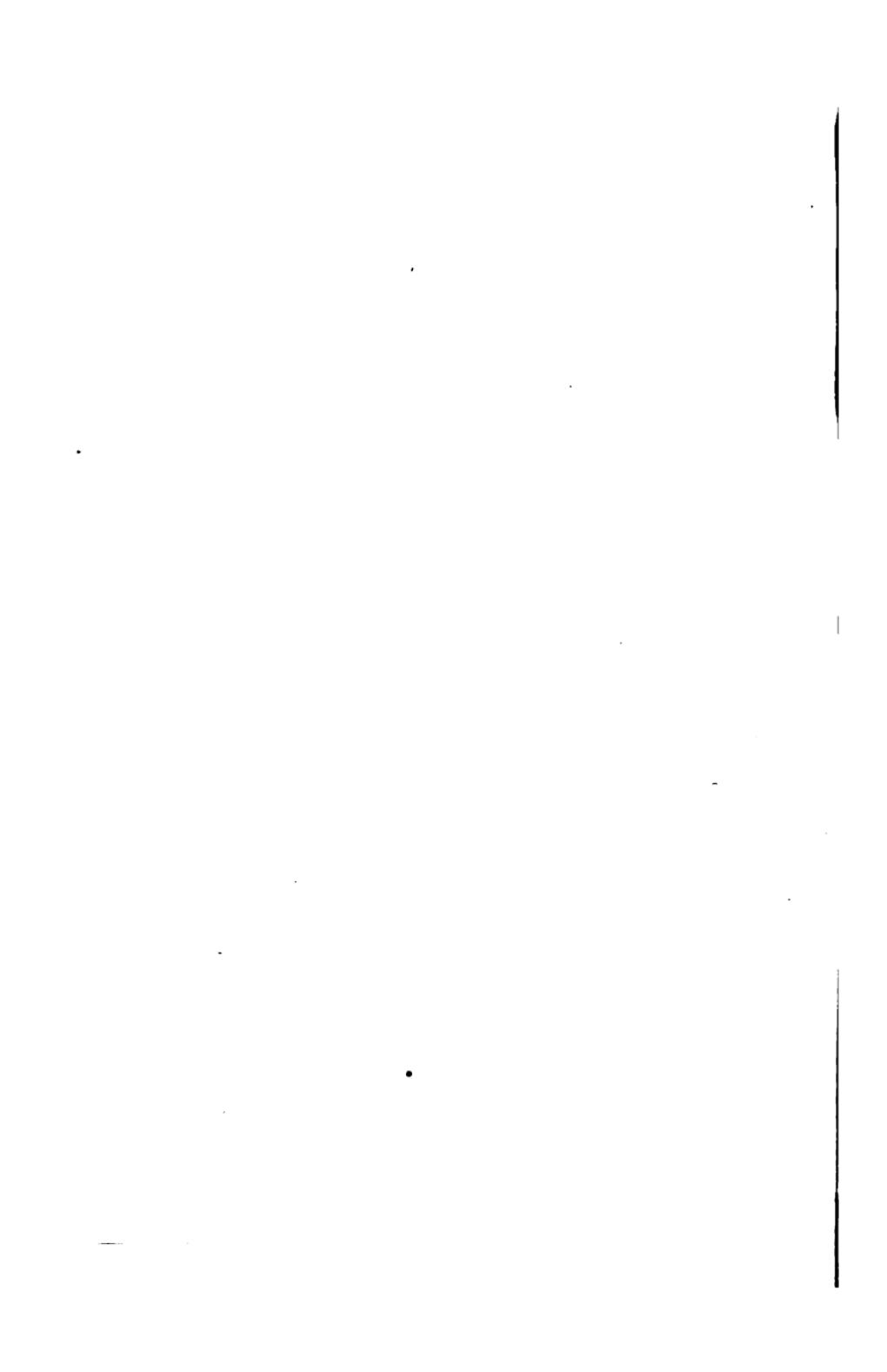
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Songs of the Sioux.



SONGS OF THE SIOUX.

I stood by the swelling river
One day in early spring,
When the banks with murky waters
Were teeming to the brim—
The grinding, ice flotilla
Was a thernody supreme,
While in the headlong torrent
Awakening life was seen.

Again, when summer's glory
Illumed the bending sky,
I sought the dappling shadows
Where the river murmured by;
The grimy flood had vanished,
My eyes beheld before,
And an anthem of bursting gladness
The dimpling current bore.

At length when the hand of autumn
The clinging leaves flung down,
To mantle the face of nature
With a carpet soft and brown;
I paused me in my pathway
To view the darkling scene,
But no song from the fettered river
Arose to cheer my dream.

But I knew the resurrection
Of spring would re-appear,
And I knew the song was present
Tho' it fell not on my ear,
And I knew the All-good Father
Intended, wisely too,
To teach a goodly lesson
In the varied songs of the Sioux.

THE OLD STAGE LINE.

THE old stage line ran through this town
Rounding those bluffs serene and brown,
To the falls of the Sioux was its route you
know,
From that center of trade thirty leagues below.
Known to fame is Sioux City now,
Cluster'd about fair Prospect's brow.

Right where we pause was a tavern then;
I was a boy, but there were men,
And scores of them rode on that tally-ho
Between the Falls and the place below—
But no false meaning to “place below,”
For that's where slumbers the tally-ho!

AT SPIRIT MOUND.

THE wraiths of ancient dwellers bide
Within thy bre'st, and darkly hide
The lore and cunning of a race
Whom time turned from thy magic face;
Yet spirits, made of thinner stuff,
Haunt still this plow-environed bluff,
And chant their rosary of days
That bow'd at last to whitemen's ways.

NIGHT ON THE SIOUX.

SOFTLY the darkness falls, and such mild dark!
The stars have scarce a need their veils to
lift,

That they may smile upon the bended mark
Of sinking Luna. The thicket's festooned
rift

Mellows the major of the thrush's cry,
While the dim quaver of the home-dove's sigh,
Waiting the coming of her lover true,
Broods like enchantment o'er the fading Sioux.

Silver and purple now the river drifts! So
calm

The skies that hover o'er! I fain would lie
Here by myself and know the stealing balm
Of that intrepid mood that would defy
The clustered memories of care, and put aside
The iron law which doth our joys divide
With rudest glee. Find thou, my heart,
The solace this dear moment doth impart.

Find, too, my soul, the sweetness garnered
here,

Where only natures's forms, with harmony
Of color and of sound, do now appear;
And with these waters yearning for the sea

'Neath even's hush strike sacred fellowship—
That thou in God's good time may likewise
drift,
A throbbing dream upon such plastic blue
As gives its music to the twilight Sioux!

TO A BENTON STEAMBOAT.

BESIDE the broad, engulfing stream
A child I view'd the steamer's course,
Its biceps seemed a living dream
Bent to the river's headlong force.

It sped a creature girt with life
Endow'd for bold immensities,
With hope alone in heaving strife
As praised are ships from raging seas.

Laden with stores for waiting ports
She needs must scorn the raging tide,
At last to gladden lonely hearts,
The rolling prairies now divide.

The bend is rounded! Trails the smoke
In thinning ribbons down the sky,
The echoes die thy powers awoke,—
Proud journeyer, good-bye!

A MISSOURI RIVER IDYL.

(A RELIC OF STEAMBOATING DAYS.)

[NOTE.—The following satire in verse is founded on local history. The *buried treasure* is in the river south of Elk Point.]

FULL forty years have come and fled,
With changes rare and manifold,—
The old of then hath sought his bed—
The youth with mid-age grapples bold,—
Since from the lower river came
A low-browed steamer of the line
That far to Benton made the fame
Of the Missouri half sublime.

A plodding freighter, laden deep
With implements and dewy stores,
Up past the Sioux's bright thread doth keep
Along Dakota's timbered shores;
The churning paddles beat the waves
That haunt her prows to swirls of foam,
And fill with envy feathered braves
Who guide their bark flotillas home.

Two scores of miles she onward speeds,
With smoking stacks and jolly crew;
The pilot from his vantage feeds

His eye on prospects wide and new;
When lo! that rending cry is heard—
Fire! fire! the hold is all in flames!
Then like a red-winged evil bird.
The darting serpent fills the mains.

Put her aground and scuttle her!
Twas but the work of moments few,
And soon upon a lonely bar
Half naked stood the husky crew,
But that was four decades ago;
Each sought a way as best he might,
But 'neath the torrent's booming flow
That stranded hulk sank out of sight.

Sank out of sight! but memory
Kept ever in her archives' store
Those goods of rarest quality
That boat upon her up-trip bore,
And ever thro' the intervene
Of drouth and 'hoppers' heavy stress,
Like some half-real Arabian dream,
A glass to parching lips would press.

Bacchus! how fickle thus to set
Thy shrine mid shifting, tireless sands!
A taunt to such as draw the net,
A mummied jest in birchen bands,

While votaries anear and far
Have delved into that mystic bed
And sought with guy and lifting-spar
Mixed glory on the land to shed.

Cool and refreshing, keep thy stay
Where fire and wave thy couch hath lain,
While fishes o'er thy wreckage play,
And night-pokes 'honk 'their dull refrain,
Wind mid thy banks and guard for aye,
O stream, this unrequited brew,—
Kentucky's colonels may not lay
Their lips to demijohns than you

More peacefully and darkly stored;
No Frenchman's wine or German's beer
A grander record may afford
Of ripened, finished, amber cheer;—
Yet we Dakotans keep our creeds,
Nor crooked grow our paths for this;—
Sleep thou! 'neath the sand-bar's summer
weeds
A tomb of rich and barreled bliss.

SONNET—POINT OF THE HILLS.

POINT of the hills! and Richland stands
Just at the blending of their strands;
Eastward the fair Sioux keeps her course
To give to a greater her sparkling force;
The alders along it faintly lined
Close at hand doth the Brule wind;
While far to the south the blue dy'd hills
Of the realm of smoke send their tiny rills
Down to the sand-swept, wily flood,
That reckons not for wealth or blood.
And as at this vantage goal I stand,
Unto my eyes spreads a Canaan-land,
And tho'ts most tender my bosom swell
As I view the haunts where my sweet dreams
dwell!

FAIR AKRON.

FAIR village! thine the raptured lot
To bide in Nature's chosen spot,
To nestle 'twixt the gentle swell
Of bluff and winding river dell;
Oft have I view'd thee from afar
Bright in the sun's flashed scimeter,
And mus'd upon thy favor'd part
So closely clasp'd to Beauty's heart!

DAYBREAK ON THE PRAIRIES.

LIGHT of dawn! and liquid reveille
Of peeping songsters. Gift of morn!
And music from her gates. O day,
Thy flushing skies have Eden shorn
Of half its splendor, and here repaid
Man's footsore wandering from his ancient
bower,
Kindling new hope within the soul dismayed
At finding husks instead of pictured dower.

O, flashing scimiters, shivered on the world!
Dipping the prairie in a tremulous sheen,
Drifting along the vales, and curled
Against the coteaux—a phantom dream,
Loosed by some spirit on the edge of night,
To frolic 'mid the haunts of men and find
If heaven-bred beauties have reward in flight
To scenes where virgin rivers seaward wind.

O fairer are these meadows than the fields
The angels shape from tattered clouds of
storms!
And Ophir's dales with fable-lifted shields
Of flaming gold, dim not thy forms;
For here the heart in kinsman harmony

Blends with the Master touch at morn and
noon
And sipping deep the even's reverie
Sleeps on the prairie's bosom 'neath the
moon.

ODE TO CRILL'S MILL.

AGAINST the sky thy tall form stands,
A sentinel of rest and cheer;
The oak flume guides with iron bands
The labor of each whirling sphere,
Which casts its white breath forth
In token of the harvest's worth.

Below thee slope the sylvan nooks,
Beside the willow-bordered stream,
Where Waltons bait their dangling hooks
And toss them to the eddy's gleam,
For pike and pickerel idly dart
Beneath the mossy timber's heart.

Yet, thou, fair mill, a sterner share
Than dull repose doth boast;
A toil is thine most sweet and rare,—
Ye are the yeoman's host,
And from thy tills a snowy flood
Cometh to build for brain and blood.

LYRIC TO THE JIM.

A CHARMING river is the Jim
For the anvil-pounding singer.
There, lyric, sonnet, ode and hymn
In the haunts of gumbo linger;
But he must delve, who e'er wouldst win
The beauties of that stream
And give account for ev'ry sin
That cometh of his dream.

AT NORWEGIAN LAKE.

A LAKE! I scarce could call thee that
Were fancy ne'er so kind,
For 'mid wild reeds, o'er gumbo flat
Thy sluggish waters wind.
Yet do I love thee for the days
That sportsman blood led hither,
When all my eager heart and gaze
Across thy bre'st would quiver,—
For there the teal and mallard swam,
Red-heads, blue-wings, O clover
Of trophies that the shotted dram
Led me a tireless rover!

BY THE VERMILLION.

[Report of a camper who tried its fishing.]

THE Vermillion! O yes, it is fair,
 But pray do not argue the case;
So, also, is sun-shining hair—
 But alas for the freckle-kisst face!
I love all the rivers, of course,
 That the home of my fancy wind thro',
From their mouths to the coteau-crowned
 source,
 But dearest of all is the Sioux!

ON HARNEY'S CREST.

THY shoulders, Harney, cleave the skies,
A mantle therefrom on thee lies,
More pure than ermine fleece.
So towering, chill, yet wrapt in peace
Art thou! Tho' oft the gods of tempests rest
Upon thy flanks, in frowning quest
From Jupiter's brow, and gazing down,
Scorn the low-huddled mining town,
And deem the furnace's smoking blast
A puppet's anger at thy splendors cast.

THE CYCLONE.

BORN 'mid the strife of elements
That have no harmony in common,
Fierce child of devil form, the Eden shape,
Save only that this serpent of the air
Comes not with fawning stealth
As that of old, but rocked in arms
Of flaming sinews, clad in snapping clouds,
Lullabied by hoarsest mother of the sky,—
So dost thy face appear! A smile,
Forsooth, darker than hell's last ashes,
Clings to thy grave-cold lips,
And on thy brow a frown more black
Than heartless Cain's. The strongest man
A little child becomes. The whispered prayer,
Th' look of 'palling tear, find only scorn
Within thy eyes. The death-traced track
Piled by loosed imps' endeavor! Th' music
That found its chord in masses for lost souls
Dies on the hills in muttered requiems.

THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER.

THOU sailest not, O, errant bark,
Upon the rocking track of ocean;

But o'er the undulating plain
Thou ploddest on with rhythmic motion.

Thy sail has furled as Vesper's star
Peeped o'er the bluffs above the Sioux,
While on the voyageur's eager gaze
Broke, Canaan-like, Dakota's view.

Beyond the low-banked, muddy Jim,
On, on, past Harney's wilding height,
The sinuous trail hath marked the day
And flaming camp illumed the night.

Thro' canyons' shadowed depths, still on!
By icy streams o'er boulders racing,
And far on plateau's darkling swell
Where prairie-fires were madly chasing.

O, Eldorado, this the gateway,
By which our sons thy realm did enter:
And what a race! what stalwart souls,
Who held no place for weak dissenter.

Precursor of the iron steed,
Which spurns its task with feet of fire!
Thou, too, must join the useless throng
Which shrivel on tradition's wire.

But we shall miss thy tattered dome,
O, prairie schooner, first of all!

And as the marvelous years extend
Thy wayworn form shall oft recall.

SUNSET ON THE MISSOURI.

BEHIND an ash-crowned ridge
The fierce, failing sun descends;
And from his fiery gate extends,
O'er velvet film, a golden bridge.

The river croons its old, old plaint;
Oh, will it never weary of the song!
And a gaunt echo answers aye, ere long
It, too, will linger in restraint.

But tho' this daytime gleam depart—
This yellow bank be locked in gloom—
No gentle flower doth doubt the bloom
The morrow's sunbeam shall impart.

And so with thee, unfaithful one,
For see, the vigil star unveils,
Know God's good pleasure never fails,
The night confirms the promised dawn.

THE SIOUX FALLS.

BEAUTIFUL falls of the jasper-bound Sioux,
Winding and crossing the waters descend,
Blended in the rainbows of serpentine hue
When the bright sunlight its spectrum doth
lend.

Oft by thy side in the seasons agone
Red men and white have the pickerel lured;
Thence to thy marge sprang the unstartled
fawn
Ere man dominion of acres had procured.

Here came the Indian lovers to rove—
Sweethearts of summers no bard hath de-
clared;
Sang the young savage of warpath and love,
Chanted of foemen who illy had fared.

Thus to the city which views thee with pride,
From the far corners of infinite source,
Erst sweethearts come that their knots be un-
tied
By the delicate fingers of modern divorce.

Falls of the Sioux, there is hope in thy name!
Tho' frozen in pyramids thy foam is to-day;

For 'neath thy shackles low gurgles proclaim
Snapping of fetters and tossing of spray.

THE QUEEN CITY.

O, city of jasper, queen city
More regal than Athens art thou,
Thy statesmen and prelates are witty,
And progress engirdles thy brow.

I have known from my childhood the stories
Of a city not builded by hands,
But a dark, silent stream shorn of glories
Is the price that its knowledge demands.

But now I retain scarce a yearning
For those beauties in jasper foretold,
Since I've known the sweet lights that are
streaming
From dwellings not builded of gold.

O, city of jasper, queen city!
Most fair are thy daughters, I ween;
Thy statesmen and prelates are witty,
Earth's city of jasper, my queen!

THE VANISHED LAKE.

SOUTH to the Nebraska hills,
Eastward to Iowa's frills,
North unto the gentle rise,
'Neath the hush of Paradise;
 Lay the lake.

Not white man nor red, but blue,
Oar unto its bosom drew;
Or within the sheltered dale
Furled the fleecy-woven sail;
 They were mound-builders.

And as when the Pleiades
On celestial, bended knees,
Lisp heaven's rosary, are pure,
They truth's search-light might endure,
 Beacons of Eden's ray!

On the bluff-tops, in the calm
Steeped in that sweet primal balm,
Burned the sacred altars bright,
Holy to the king of night;
 Heralds of the human faith!

Thus the eons sped, until
From the northward swept a thrill

Of glacial majesty and power,
Quick as thunderous trump and shower,
To a summer day.

Moving plains of grinding ice
Locked the hills as in a vice,
Tore the granite rocks apart,
Shook the world unto its heart;
You may doubt the story.

Years and years again go by,
Till at length the land is dry,
And a mighty river flows
From the mountains' far off snows;
But the lake is gone.

Tho' maybe the Muddy's roar
Might teach somewhat of that lore,
Men delve deep to find,
In her fickle course defined;
But beware her clasp.

In the lake-bed tillers raise
Glorious maize and cabbages,
War o'er politics and creeds—
Half the flowers of life call weeds;
This is the epilogue.

A PRAIRIE LULLABY.

DREAMILY sweet the winds are sighing
O'er the prairies clad in snow,
In the bare tree-tops fairies are crying
Pitiful plaints to the world below;
Pillow thy head here, slumber awaits thee—
Down from the spaces the angels send balm;
Hush! my beloved, out on the dream-sea
Go we when waters are star-lit and calm.

All the night long in bed-clothes of silver
Wrapped shall the flowers be we so loved,
Ne'er may the goblins their hiding discover,
Tho' by the witching breeze e'er they be
roved.
Close to my bosom thy sunny head nestles,
Holding thee, folding thee, thus do we drift
Down to the lotus lanes, where summer breath
rustles—
Beckoned to gardens where tinkling founts
lift.

Here on the floor the headless doll shivers,
Up on the wall are the "chickies," well
known;
The toy-sheep's wool in the fire-draught quivers;
Under the table are yellow gourds strewn.

Hushaby! out to the valley of quiet,
Peace-sprinkled argosies bid thee embark;
Silent the romp of the day and the riot—
Holiest vigils shall people the dark!

Now are the eyelids dreamy and drooping,
Turned to my heart is the velvety cheek;
Over the lashes fancies are trooping,
Fancies, philosophers vainly shall seek.
Far in the meadow the asters lie buried,
Tracing the gullies the famished winds rove
As thou, from this harbor by shining oars fer-
ried,
Art crossing the rivers of rest in my love!

THE DEADWOOD COACH.

WINDING among the foothills,
Recklessly up and down she sped,
Yellow turf beneath the wheels,
Bluest the vaulty dome o'erhead;
This is the Deadwood coach, heigh ho!
Chasing the winds in days of old,
Bearing its eager, human freight,
Thirsting to reach the land of gold.

Here a callow youth from Maine
Sits by a plainsman grizzled brown,
The one uncertain his scalp-locks hold,
The other game, hands up or down;
Both of the same unresting thought—
Their El Dorado, the treasure height,
The hasty fortune, no toiling years,
No empty visions of the night!

Returning now in her dizzy chase,
The lurking "agent" views his prey,
As fiercely down a pass she sweeps,
Like an ill-starred soul to eternity:
"Up with yer han's, an' mighty quick!
Stop, er daylight peeps thro' you!
Out with that box, git in a line,
Buziness is rushin', words is few!"

Thus was the routine of those days
Salted with romance, prompt and keen,
Some, stark and low on the dazzling trail,
Nourished the coyote, shy and lean;
Now we whirl over the steely rails,
Restless men fore'er encroach,
But we turn to the "woolly" page again,
And leave a tear for the Deadwood coach.

LINES ON THE "BROKEN KETTLE."

I DEEM it true that Nature's hand
In kneading rock and loam and sand
Grew weary in this clifly dale
At some far even, dim and pale,
Leaving her effort incomplete;
For rude knobs vex, and winding ways
Confuse, no woodman's axe might "blaze."
Did Cyclop masons rue this spot,
Or were fair plans in haste forgot,
And they a notch moved further west
In the Sioux's vale to do their best?

ELK POINT, ON THE RANDALL
TRAIL.

FOUR miles west of Iowa's hills,
East and north of Nebraska's frills,
Close to the roily, grim Missou',
A league-and-a-half from the old Big Sioux,
That's Elk Point, and a goodly place!
Bewhisker'd with shade trees is her face.
Thro' her street runs the Randall trail,
Or did, ere the long cars bade it pale.
Peace to thee, town, 'neath the burnish'd sky,
Square of conscience and fat of thigh!

MILL-STREAM MUSINGS.

Off by the old mill-stream I've lingered,
Ere yet the light had parted from the day,
While overhead the restless leaves seemed fingered
By infinitesimal hands of rising spray.
The katydids among the alders drowsier groweth,
The rope wheels' jingling rhythm now is still,
But ever on the white-flecked waters floweth,
Their globe-encircling destiny to fill.

And hence in fancy have I wandered hither
Along those summer banks, 'mid trellised vines,
An aimless arrow from an aimless quiver,
Lured by the zodiac of dreamers' signs;
Tho' in my vision dwelt the tardy fisher
Yet striving, and the sun so low! so low!
Faith! I was more with him than with the river,
As mockingly the fishes trooped below.

I saw his heavy steps at last turned homeward,
While in his brain some decent tale he plan'd,

Of how that bait was coy or winds untoward;
Thus that his void luck might be mildly
scanned;
Mayhap he'd paused with him who spread the
trammel,
If to the streets his steppers' heads were
bent
That all his loved ones might with praises mar-
vel.
(They'd never miss the paltry shillings
spent.)

So shall the curtain of the darkness flutter
Down on the ripples that the eddies fill,
And all the sprites shall dance while night-
winds mutter
The whirling music of a ghost quadrille;
Departed fisher! and departed babble;
The dews are falling, and the Dippers gleam
Here where the daytime's romping rabble
Made merry with its cheer, the old mill-
stream.

SUNRISE O'ER THE SIOUX.

ROUSE! rouse, the somber shades are fled,
Come forth and see the silvern rose,
In tint of lambent red and gold,
Bloom on Iowa's green coteaux.

The line of emerald cottonwoods
Floats in an evanescent lake
Of billowy mist, while here and there
Earth's songsters gladsome matins wake!

Why seek in other climes to view
From pinnacle the dawn expand?
Here is a picture quite as rare,
As lights the Berenese Oberland!

Break slumber, sleep in transient death,
Seek nectar from morn's lotus lips;
Their gifts of strength yields no compare
To fairy's founts apocalypse!

That round orb quavers on the hill,
Scorning the departing gloom;
As rose the Nazarene,
Spurning the Roman's tomb.

Now shoots the pearly course
Up thro' the dome of blue;
Life holds no promise holier
Than sunrise o'er the Sioux.

THE HARP OF THE WILDWOOD.

A voice in the wildwood is warbling
A song I have learned to adore,
It fills me with purest emotions
And mellows my heart to the core.
When a breeze roams down through the forest,
Or a quail trills her notes clear and sharp,
It falls on my ear as sweet music,
And soothing the strain, wildwood harp!

Sweet musician, can I ever forget thee,
Thou who hast charmed me so long?
Ye have held me a fond willing vassal
When I wandered the river along,
Encouraged unsatisfied feelings,
That rankled and would not be still;
Ye taught me the codes that are stable,
Kind spirit of woodland and rill.

Perchance, in the Heaven I'm seeking
The story ye tell I shall hear,
In anthems, from lips I have cherished
And caressingly fondled while here;
O, harp of the wildwood, Beethoven
Was great for he listened to thee—
Thy lessons are constant and boundless,
May they never be silenced to me!

ULLABY—SNUGGLE DOWN.

SNUGGLE close in my bosom, dear,
Here where the stars are peeping,
Over the fields strew golden cheer
And the angels guard are keeping.

Down thro' the meadows of sweet repose
Voices of dreams are calling,
Hither the barque of slumber goes,
While dews on the trees are falling.

Harps æolian the branches are,
See how they gently quiver;
On the tip of that elm is a tiny star
To point to the brink of the river.

Snuggle close, dear, there is no fee
Nor sorrow in thy dreaming,
Rambles Elysian wait on thee
And all the orbs are gleaming!

AT SERGEANT FLOYD'S GRAVE.

How sleepest thou, bold youth,
Within thy shadowy place? The years,
Four score or more, have crept along

And past thee in their maddened haste;
Thee, with thy unrealized song
Hushed by the broad river's waste.

Dost ever thought come of the magic change
Of teeming cities and of golden farms;
Dost ever on thy mute ear fall
The din of traffic that prevails anear?
Ah! couldst thou comprehend it all
Thy rest might be more dear!

For thee the solitude reserved a couch,
And when the hands that laid thee down
And heaped thy solitary mound, the band
Of sun-brown'd voyageurs pressed on,
And left thee sleeping in a land
That none but savages looked upon.

But now high bridges span the turbid flood,
And commerce bears her torch far, far be-
yond
To realms faint portrayed in thy breaking
dreams.
Howe'er 't will be thy lot to share
The light that on that virgin pathway beams
And thousands to thy resting place repair!

PICKIN' CORN.

PICKIN' CORN.

TELL you what, a feller's got
 Tu be right up to snuff,
To hustle out before the day
 On eastern skies paints its soft buff,
An' tear down twixt the frosty rows
 O' glistenin' corn, while on th' dump
Th' moon's still shinin'—'Kota boys
 Git jest that sort o' hump.

Th' bracin' prairie breezes seem
 Tu set the nerves a-singin', like
Some good ol' fiddle's dashin' air—
 An' fore you know, you're up an' strike
Th' hosses with their harnesses,
 An' whizz acrost th' stubble-land—
Head up, an' coat-tails standin' out,
 Stiff as a cockney four-in-hand.

Stake your life, these Western chaps
 Kin make the ears fly lively, yit
They don't set roun' on boxes an'
 Make whittlin's while they brag uv it.
Choppin' in the pineries, ner
 Klondike sluicin' don't come near
With pilin' eighty bushels out
 Uv ol' Dakota's golden cheer!

ON THE CAMPUS.

OUT on the campus, and the moonlight
Falls the white and fair from bluest skies,
The sleepy town with its points of light
Knows not our dreams of paradise.

A " Fresh " am I, thou a " Soph " regal,
Yet what of these puny disparities?
Who shall declare my love illegal
When bowing to such a face and such eyes!

What care we, dearest, for the curfews—
Snares that the keen professors lay?
Or what regard for the toiling morrows
When held up beside our ecstasy!

SAL AND HIRAM IN DAKOTY.

FIVE year coming next spring,
Me and Sal—tail name's Doty—
Sed goodbye to York State,
And landed in Dakoty;
Left the train at Aberdeen,
'Spected to get a singein'
Eny minit by a prairie fire—
Sal she looked for Injun.

Bought a rippin' quarter-piece,
Breakin' and sod shack thowd in,
Fer four hundred dollar. Cheap!

Sal sed, "Hiram, it's a sin
To rob a fellow-mortal so;"
She'd got over bein' skeered
About massacres an' cowboys,
Thet she on the start had feared.

Back in Rocky Cross Roads,
Where I was born an' grow'd up, sir,
Hed to dig a well to get
Dirt to raise a tater.
Fact! An' plowin' 'mong them stun
Ud try a preacher's learnin'
Tu keep from breakin' out profane
Tu cool the innerd burnin'.

Yungins healthy here as sunflowers,
Grow like fencin' willers,
Sound asleep as muskrats
Quick's they touch their pillers;
An' Sal spoke jis t'other day,
Said she, "Hiram Doty,
Don't you dare to ever sell
Our part of Dakoty."

TO MARQUETTE.

BEARER of light!

Thy bark canoe's frail path
Braved the strange waters of a savage land,
As from thy lips broke Holy Mass, and in thy
hand
Was clasped a birthright for unshapen souls;
Hail! Thy gentle purpose time extols
With reverend words, and marble 'graved and
bright.

Not with an arm
By warrior prowess-skilled
Didst thou the lone wilds pierce,
Tho' all about the red man's sway was fierce
And treachery was rife, yet thou didst go
Unmenaced, skirting wide lakes, and the far
flow
Of the great river was void to thee of harm.

However, the sweetest tale
Has scarce been told: that, when by boisterous
winds
The Indian's rude craft by the waves was tried,
Thy soothing spirit's spell was sought; and
cried
The agitated heart to thee; tho' this, indeed,
Thou wouldst have chided, for thou didst lead
To fountains that shall never fail!

FISHIN' DOWN TH' BEND.

OH, I've set fer hours an' hours
 On a stump uv cottonwood,
Whar th' willers dippt their bowers
 And the turtle-dovies cooed,—
Way down in th' bend a-fishin',
 With a bullfrog fer a bait,
An' th' bugs an' skeeters swishin'
 Round the straw reef on my pate.

Gleams o' channel cat went scootin'
 Thro' my Izaak Walton mood,
While a screech-owl's drowsy hootin'
 Filled with peace th' solitude,—
Katydid in grindin' cadence,
 Frum an elum's leafy height,
Seemed to mock my bluff o' patience
 As I waited for a bite.

Oh th' nibble uv a sucker,
 Or a turtle's measly perk
Ud give my heart a flutter
 Follered by a whiz an' jerk—
Then the line ud git tu danglin'
 'Mong th' sunflowers' yaller eyes,
Or a chubbie go a swingin'
 Frum his holt toward Paradise.

I have allus had a notion,
That a feller ain't all chump
Who obeys his fancy's motion,
Tho' it lead him to a stump
Whar th' pikies woo th' perches
An' th' birds their warbles send,
Frum th' ash an' maple arches
Skirtin' round th' river bend.

SHUCKIN' TIME.

HUSKIN' bees was long ago,—
In the barn they used to set
Roun' the fodder, so an' so,
Pulses beatin' minuet;
Candles stuck up on the wall,
Ev'ry breeze 'ud make 'em flare
So the drippin' tallow'd fall
On the puffs of truant hair.

Allus looking for red ears
Was they in them smackin' days,
An' the rule was: "No one keers,
So you don't no blisters raise."
Shuckin' kind of got the cake
In the list of social whirls,
An' our grandpaps all 'ud take
Home their fav'rites of the girls.

Dif'rent now, Dakota boys
Pile out 'fore the sleepy sun,
An' their tarnation whoops an' noise
Makes one itch to git a gun,
But, I sum! them olden crews
Thet the gran'dads brag erbout
Could n't wear these youngsters' shoes
Snatchin' flinty "Gold Mine" out.

Flippin' corn is science now
Han's all shod with scarecrow claws.
Fifty bushels some-a-how
Lose their jackets 'fore they pause
For the noon grub-hour is said;
Kids 'at make such rattlin' twirls
Don't go mosin' for the "red"
Figgerin' on' kissin' girls.

CAMPIN' ON THE SIOUX.

JEST a little shady place 'mong the trees,
Where the sunlight weaves a maze
O' flickerin' sheen, an' the toyan' breeze
On the brow its healin' lays.
Campin' on the Sioux! All the cares
O' the stubborn world put by,—

Social snuff an' stately airs,
Aye, Dame Fashion's sigh;—
Chastened by the wood-bird's trill,
Sweetened by the river's splash,
Softened 'neath the night rain's thrill
An' the thunder's crash.
Muse, O human snares and wiles,
Loungin' here apart?
Nay, youth's golden thought beguiles,
Plays within the heart;
What tho' dream-kisst summers go,
Who could winter rue!
Blest with fancy's afterglow
O' campin' on the Sioux.

AN INSCRIPTION.

THIS legend on her tomb her loving spouse
Directed to be chiseled, for ne'ermore arouse
Could he his mem'ry from the dead:
“The light of all my life has fled,”
Were the clear, 'graven words which told
Of desolateness sheer and manifold;
But ere a twelve-month cycle had gone by
On the world's beauties he re-cast his eye;
From out of the walls of those who dully
“bach”
His light was fled; but ah! another MATCH.

BLUE WINGS.

WHEN "blue wings" fly, ah me! ah me!
I want to drop these noisome cares
And shake my fetters and be free
To rove the swampy thoroughfares
And hear the gentle k-ker-quacks!
And swish of water in the reeds,
Or muse of roaming canvas-backs
On the long trail that southward leads.

I never had much sympathy
For ancient sinners who toil on
Nor ever lift their eyes to see
The glories of an autumn dawn;
Who never find a shred of joy
In tramping down a winding stream,
Where mallards in the eddies toy
And plover in the snake-grass dream.

A foggy, drizzling day like this
The beauties hang low in their flights,
And trying you could hardly miss;—
Don't bother with the wiggly sights--
Off-hand your jolly battery
And paint the sky with feathers o'er,
Then for your stories, vis-a-vis,
Bag in your fancy fifty more!

WHEN THE ICE BEGINS TO MOVE.

WHEN the ice begins to move, O, my honey,
And the breakup of the spring-time is at
hand—

Oh, it's thrilling, it is chilling and its funny
On the grim Missouri's frozen bank to stand;
There's a shiver, there's a moaning and a
groaning
And a wrenching of that winding crystal
spine;
Yea, a murmur like a darkey softly honing—
Then a crackling of old bottles with new
wine.

Oh, the heaving of the prison-weary waters,
Yearning for the ruby kisses of the sun,
Breaks, as giant slaves do break the fetters
That were riveted when winter's rule begun;
While the singing of the winds in ghostly
branches
Tells the dormant buds they soon shall have
release;
Pause! aback! the cyclops groom their
haunches—
Ay, the very gods are roused from dreams
of peace.

And I whisper, O, my honey, I must tell it:
Chink your skiff and have the hip-boots
ready, too,
When you hear that sullen rumble lest you
rue it,
From a house-top with your whole domestic
crew.
So, beware! when those shining muscles quiver,
Though the robin's throat is throbbing from
the trees,—
For, my honey, while I love that queenly river
She can be the queen of devils if she please.

MY CHUM PETE.

As I plod and journey onward
Down life's changing avenue,
Sometimes lifted to the heavens,
Sometimes sullen-like and blue—
As I flounder in these tideways
'Gainst which selfish humans beat,
Truant though it goes back to Hobville
And my true chum, little Pete.

Oh, that old barn on the hillside,
With the sturdy maples near,

Has a hold on me this turmoil
Never can quite kill or sear;
There with jolly Pete and autumn
And those flame-kissed leaves above,
I once dreamed of ideal living
On the perfumed heights of love.

For a friend eternal to me
Was that odd, sweet-hearted Pete;
When I talked to him he listened
With attention most complete.
Oft I've mused a soul communion
Born in some long vanished state
Hath the rainbow spaces traversed
Its old kinship to relate.

Folly this, you say? It may be,
Yet I like the Buddhist dream,
And if in the 'bode of spirits
On my path falls one sweet beam
'Mid the faces heaven happy,
Two gray eyes will be most sweet,
And I half believe I'll find him
Looking for me—my little dog—Pete!

MY SUMMER WAGES.

I MUSE on the spreading autumn fields,
Wrapt in the glimmer of the morning mist;
The wheat stream's flow is thin this year,
Altho' the corn looms well up on the list.
I lay my ten-cent straw hat on the shelf,
The rye is fringing at the edges so,
And fish the old gray felt from divers waifs
Which huddled, dust strewn, thro' the
summer glow.
The poet chimes of dying embers and
The leaves that crisp and flowers that go
their way;
But I must brood o'er taxes falling due,
And shoes for these twelve kids that round
me play.
The roses will be wintered as of yore,
For Riley says they sleep in beds of snow,
And as James Whitcomb was a showman once
The Hoosier Songster certainly must know;
But not with rainbow beauties may I deal,
For this sharp frost doth clearly bring to me
A truer logic than the blue and gold
Which shimmer o'er the prairie like a sea.
Across the horizon of fleeting days,
Whence these rude cowhides never more
may roam,
I view time's finger-work and grimly sigh:—
Where is the wages of my summer gone?

WHEN BONNEY PLAYS.

[**NOTE.**—Will Bonney, the 'hero' of these verses, resides in Union County, S. D., about four miles north of Akron. For almost a quarter of a century the music of his fiddle has been heard at country "hops" in the Big Sioux Valley.]

WHEN Bonney plays the air is glad
And lamps their lustre shed,
While those that think all nonsense bad
Are snugly tucked in bed;
Sweet dreams to them, no evil thrills
Shall mar the whirling maze,
Where polka, schottische and quadrilles
Respond when Bonney plays.

Somehow the music seems to creep
From off the rosin'd strings
Like little birds that pipe and peep
'Mid forest coverings;
While John or Tom each figure plans
Throughout the changing set,
With chasse, swings and alamans
And doce-belle-o-net.

When Bonney, Billy Bonney, plays,
The wall-flowers, smiling, nod,
Or tap the floor in roundelay
Where moving footsteps plod;

And all the old folks sitting there
 Think of their palmy days,
Unmindful of the silver'd hair—
 When Billy Bonney plays.

The crickets chirrup through the night,
 The katydids sit up
And blink and wriggle in the light
 Like baubles in a cup.
And all because all peevishness
 Is lying mighty low
As little streaks of worldly bliss
 Flit from Bill Bonney's bow.

It sort o' makes a fellow feel
 Like being young once more,
And down the trodden glades to steal
 To playground scenes of yore;
But fresher sprouts your elbows crowd
 In steps more neat and spry,
And looks that almost talk aloud
 As Bonney's fingers fly.

And everyone just has a time
 To tell about and laugh,
When that old fiddle's cunning rhyme
 Knocks off its gentle chaff;
And all the folks at Dickerson's

Trip home 'neath starry gleams—
But thro' their sleep the playing runs
And frolics with their dreams.

While every chap who patiently
A budding mustache curls
Hooks on at one or two or three,
Likewise the rosy girls;
And silence falls upon the floor
Ere morning paints its haze,
But hearts beat on forevermore
That dance when Bonney plays.

ANGLERS' FANCIES.

OH, THEY's remedies in plenty
Fer all kinds of ills an' wiles—
Ways uv oustin' splen'ic feelin's,
Gettin' spoony-like w'th smiles;
Sum fersake their native heather,
Plowin' misty oceans thro',
But I cut a pussy-willer
An' go fishin' in the Sioux.

With a line fast tu thet saplin',
Rigged out with an angleworm,
Snug within a cosy corner

Whar the bank is dry an' firm,
I jest drop perplexin' questions,—
Foreign outlooks, old an' new,
Tu commune w'th cat an' pick'rel
In the Adonean Sioux.

Oh, the adolescent tree-frog
Chippers tu her drowsy mate,
An' the wood-dove coos divinely
Uv his love insatiate;
Down the bend the shite-poke shambles
Neck an' trailin' feet askew,
An' in passin' hoarsely murmurs,
“Who-er-u! oh, who-er-u!”

So the problems thet air rackin'
All the wise an' great uv men—
Ethics for the Filipinos—
Never reach my humble ken;
Scholars called tu wise conventions,
Missionary meets an' teas,
Break not thro' this swarm of fancies
Whar the Sioux drifts toward the seas!

Yet I've mused on present glory,
Viewed the triumphs uv the past—
Sinks it all as sinks the lead-line
Frum my fingers lightly cast;

An' I'd ruther delve these bayous
Than the mounds where Troy grew,
For the angler's hopes are rainbows
Strung with beauties from the Sioux.

WHEN HANNAH RAKES THE YARD.

WHEN in the springtime afternoon,
While scented blooms are drifting,
And oats and wheat are widely strewn
By end-gate seeders rifting,
Fair Hannah by the spirit moved
That moves the dads and boys,
Looks o'er the house-lot uninproved
And then the yard-rake toys.
She flings old papers to the breeze,
Heaps up the chips in kops,
Rips down dry branches from the trees,
And pauses scarce or stops
Until the red fire blazes high
To greet the dusk-time witches;
While John comes home to see the sky
Lit with his last year's breeches.

DOWN BY THE SIOUX.

Down by the old Sioux in spring !
When the bottom-land is spongy-like and
damp,
And ruined haystacks give a moment's rest
From the long, swinging tramp,
And vantage-ground to wait the clattering
ducks
That storm across the timber belt, and swing
On drooping wiugs above the water splashed
prairie,
Till 'frighted by the grim repeater's ring.

Along the Sioux ! How oft these feet have
strolled
Unmindful of the striving thought of those
Who give their footsteps to the sounding pave,
Nor pause to see the morning's spreading
rose
Slip down the bluffy swales to greet
The sentinel cottonwoods and willowy hedge,
That hold in sacred guard the rude survey
Where Titan marked the river's winding
edge.

What joys for such as love the marshy wild !
Who see beyond the wind-whirled flocks
the stars
Peep from the eastern sky, as even throws
Her mellow gray upon dissolving bars
Of waning light ! How like the spirit of the
truly free
Doth seem the power which drifts the hush-
ing blue
With spring-time's northing voyagers, and
breaks
The fettered silence of the ice-faced Sioux !

FOR THE BLUES.

TIMES when everything gits contrary,
An' mean, an' sluggish; even trees,
Thet most always sort o' please,
Only seem to kinder weary;
Birds, too, 'pear all flip an' clatter,
Worse 'n a nine-day settin' hen,
Er froze ink an' a diggin' pen—
In fact, what ain't the matter?
Well, sech a time, I git the ol'
Fishpole down, dig a can
O' angle-wurms an' fan

A dozen clackin' frogs, roll
A sandwich er two in a paper,
 An' light out fer the river.
 'Pears like a feller never
Cut a neater caper,
Fer after 'while, bakin' there
 In the sun an' takin' in bites
 Right an' left, without eny slights,
An' not much time to spare,
I sorter git limbered up,
 An' smilin'er an' meller,
 Tearin' this way an' that, an' yeller
Roses on the banks hump
Their selves an' look real fine;—
 Better 'en most eny news
 Is a day's fishin' fer the blues;
Gall jest steals down the line.

THE TWO CHILDHOODS.

I saw within a stuffy court of law,
Where Justice ever pleads, but poorly wins,
A scene to make the childless blankly stare,
And fill with envy such as boast of twins.

A patriarch of men sat near the bar,
A great grandfather, if it please you so,
While on his knee there played his latest heir,
A wee sweet tot just old enough to crow.

The silk-soft fingers clutched the snowy beard,
Across the brow the ruby points were run,
And half the wrinkles seemed transfigured then
To lines of pride, the weight of ninety-one,

Grim years of earth were lifted quite away
By this glad meeting of time's wide extremes,
For, tho' the limbs be palsied, in the eye
Is the reflection of the youth's first dreams.

Dreams, did I say? A stupid word indeed!
Such vapid fancies are for hence undone,
Aye, who would seek their airy wings forsooth,
Compared to fatherhood at ninety-one.

Enough! DeLeon beat the tangled wilds—
The crown of youth he sought, but never won,
While on Dacotah's winter-riven hills
I know a fond papa at ninety-one!

CHIP UV TH' OL' BLOCK.

WHEN Hennery listed fer the war
'Bout ev'ry un perked up an' sed
'Twar th' bes' thing he could do;
'Ud get drilled thru' by Spanish lead,
Seein' es how that Lindgray breed
'Us short on crap an' big on weed.
But Hennery, w'en they spoke fer men,
Jes' up an' offered uv hisself
At fourteen dollars U. S. pelf
A munth. The surgeons sed he'd do
Ter tote up canteens fer th' crew,
W'ile the home goodies lisped Amen,
A-gittin' rid uv Hennery then.
"A wuthless cuss as ever breathed"—
Ol' Deacon Hobbins' mind relieved ;
But w'en th' Yankee boys kep' line
Afore thet blizzard-storm of shot
On Santiago's swelterin' height,
An' th' dispatches sed thet not
One chap poked out th' feather white;
W'ile countin' uv the dead thet lay
Close tu them guns 'us Hank Lindgray—
I tell you w'en thet news wur fotch
Th' Lindgray stock went up a notch,
An' all th' Hobbins crowd slunk out
Tu think how it cud cum erbout.

DRIVIN' FISH.

Did ye ever go a-fishin', a-fishin' thro' the ice?
Well, I golly, it is funny, tho' the cuttin' ain't
so nice.
You've got to make a line of holes, one big
un fer the "draw,"
An' the water gets to splashin' as you double-
hand the saw;
Then ye pole the ol' seine under, leavin' some-
thin' of a bag.
Now they're ready fer the drivin', an' the fish
begin to wag,
While the small boy heaps th' fire made of
bushy willer trees.
An' the fellers, splashed and splattered, hug
'er close to miss the breeze;
But I tell ye w'en th' hosses come a-whirlin'
tu the close,
Ye fergit erbout th' norther playin' roun' yer
ears an' nose;
While that draw-rope goes a-whistlin' thro' a
score of willin' han's
An' brings out the floppin' beauties in a pile
upon th' san's.
Oh, ye talk erbout yer honors an' yer man-
sions big an' nice,
But fer solid fun 'an' frolic give me fishin'
thro' th' ice.

WHEN THE ICE IS OUT.

When the ice has floated seaward,
And the fish are on the move,
With the pikies and the pickerel galore,
It won't take no endless blarney
That old saintly truth to prove,
That there's magic where the ripples kiss
the shore.

When the angleworms are creeping
In the upper crust of loam,
And the fork is standing handy by the
shed,
While a stray kid wants a nickel to go prod-
ding for the bait,
And no wind the eddies frizzle with their
foam
From the pink and opal sky above your
head.

Why, it takes a good deal sternness—
More than I could hold in tow—
To forget the pussy willows' waving plea
And that katydid exhorter in the hollow of
the bend,
Where the glass-eyed cat-owl moans his lone
ow! ho!
When the ice has drifted downward to the
sea.

AT CRUMRINE'S.

MAIDS and men were gathered there
From table-land and bluff,
And furry capes touched dimples fair
Half hid by jaunty muff ;
The moon had silvered all the world
Save that bright realm within,
Where dainty toe and cowhide whirled
Their rhymes to violin.

The short-frocked belles of fifteen springs
Swung gaily, hand to hand,
With such as purchase teething-rings
Or sovereign rights demand ;
While young ma'mas as choice and sweet
As erstwhile they had been,
Pat with the fiddle's rocking beat
A wrap-piled baby den.

The phantom airs of city folk
In "swallow"-fashioned set
And lofty dash, do not provoke
Rude smiles at decollete,
For Paris modes are given rule
Without the low-cut whim
By rosy mistresses of school
And farmers' daughters trim.

I love the flights of orators,
And court the poet's song,
The far hurrahs of foresters
Bid sylvan fancies throng
To mossy nooks where pickeral
Steal thro' the mirrored streams,
Or start in blouse and overall
The sly grouse from her dreams.

But naught there is of ecstacy
So full of pleasure's glow
As wooing this quick phantasy
Of flashing heel and toe;
And Crumrine's is a forum space
Where cares may not invade
To trace their maps on beaming face
Of country Jake and maid.

WHEN THE PRAIRIE HEN IS RIPE.

'BOUT the time the granger's stackin'
Is all capped off an' complete,
An' his sickle-bar is whackin'
Down the blue-j'int tall an' sweet,
There's a sort o' restless feelin'
Comes with dreams o' juicy snipe
Thro' the golden stubble stealin'—
When the prairie hen is ripe.

Then they git the boys together,--
Parkers, Winchesters an' dogs,
An' a clinkin' case to smother
Pains from joltin' over bogs;
An' before the hayseed's milkin'
Has been done at peep o' day,
O'er his high corn-patch the welkin'
Rings the prairie hen's dismay.

Oh, the tellin' shots and flushin'!
How they make the heart-blood leap!
An' the banter freely gushin'
As the birds air put to sleep;
Who doth heed the fitful cussin'
Of the man that owns the land,
If the pointer, never rushin',
Leads ye to a double hand?

But, perhaps, as ye air workin'
Down a covey to its close,
Mr. Granger quits his jerkin'
Of the udder fount thet flows,
An' before the fellers know it
He has chained the heavy gate,
An' his skillful tongue a forfeit
Wins, point blank, for his estate.

Just the same, as summer splendor
Mellows into autumn haze,

An' the chicks so young an' tender
 Swell the farmer's bounteous praise,
He were but a hateful cynic
 Who could grumble o'er his pipe
An' deny the meadow's magic
 When the prairie hen is ripe.

LITTLE JOSH.

I KNOWED a little feller once,
 They allus called him Josh—
I spect Josiah was his name,
 But everything was "bosh"
About that little kid, an' so,
 They whittled down his call,—
"Twas Josh do this, an' Josh do that,
 "Twas Josh that run for all.

His freckles was the biggest kind
 I ever yet had seen,
His hair was thick an' fiery red,
 The orbs of blue were green;
A homely little cuss, I trow,
 As e'er snigged punkin pie.
His sisters ordered him around,
 Except when ma was nigh.

His ma she sorter doted on
The scrawny little whelp,
An' used to hug him now and then
In payment for his help,
An' say he was her faithful Josh,
An' even spoke pet names,—
Then Josh boo'd out an' bubbled o'er,
Forgettin' all his games.

The other boys an' girls at last
Were in the social swell,
But Josh was allus overlooked
An' left at home to dwell ;
An' then his ma ud try to smooth
The slights which did invest,
An' though a head above her, he
Found comfort on her breast.

The other sons positions filled
In town and country-side,
The daughters changed their pretty names
As each became a bride;
But no one seem'd to care for Josh,
An aimless orb was he,
His plowin' cut an' covered, an'
In figgers he's at sea.

One day the news come that the Maine
Was sunk by Spanish hate—

The country's heart was wildly thrilled
O'er its brave seamen's fate;
An' soon there came a call for men
To play war's awful game,
An' on the rolls at Rusticville
I saw Josh scrawl his name.

With Roosevelt he climbed the hill—
San Juan's bloody height;
He sweltered in a trench by day,
He buried dead at night;
At length the fever's subtle sting
Was fastened to his frame,
While in the tented hospital
He bore the rack of pain.

Half way across the continent
A loving mother sped
To meet the boat which bore the corse
Of Josh—her Josh—now dead ;
A pallor hid his freckles now,
The red shock hung in curls,
The village boys were sober grown,
Nor giggled now the girls.

A flowery mound at Rusticville
Proclaims the volunteer,
The autumn leaves a carpet weave,
The night rain sheds its tear;

Who knows but in the humblest breasts
 May bide the gold and gem
Which mould the heroes of the world
 When duty asks for them?

A LITTLE NORSKY GAL.

I HIRED out in husking time
 To old Nils Hoveland,
Who sometimes took a Yank or so
 When he was shortly mann'd.
He reckouned I "kud mak the kobs
 Yoost crazy vid mah speed,"
And to the three cents and my 'eat',
 He readily agreed.

I made the yellow, flinty stuff
 Dance jigs against the 'throw,'
And hardly had the frost gone up
 Before my load did show—
I rattled in at half-past ten,
 Elated with my skill,
To meet sweet Tina driving out
 To make the second fill.

I yanked up 'longside with a frown,
 Tore down the scooping-tail,

And madly did my shovel fly
Across the border-rail;
To think that I should beaten be
By that pink-fingered gal
Just got my dander to the front,
You may bank on it, Sal.

The fifteen bushels more that I
Got credit for at noon
Would not outweigh the twenty-one
That answered Tina's tune;
And she, confound it! pitied me,
With blushes beaming o'er,
Because my wrist was swollen so,
And fingers thin and sore.

I could not, do my level best,
Come up to that girl's mark,
And brisk old Nils would guffaw
About his "leettle lahrk"
And tell me if I had "von vife
Lak Tena, und a claim,
I soon don't haf to huskin' go"—
By jucks! I thought the same.

And so I struck her "foder" for
A winter's job of chores,
And 'neath the snowy stars of eve
I scored with Tena's scores;

At present she doth sometimes come
Afield to show me how
Much quicker "von" can get a load
When hustled by his "frau."

SONG OF THE OWL.

O YE who watch the martins
Amid the storm-dript eaves,
Or list to the blackbirds' matins—
A sable choir in the trees;
Or who with vision lifted
And ear alert for his lay
Follows the bright lark drifted
In the glow of the gates of day,
Think ye of one whose darkness
Is framed in relentless gray?
Muse ye of one whose madness
Voices a world's dismay?

I am the Owl, and, singing,
I touch on the same old note,
And the charm that should go winging
Slumbers still in my throat.
Yet all the toil and scheming
Of men whose souls seem glad

With the flash-songs that are streaming
To my gloomness seem to add.
But still to the bosom ruffled,
Sphinx-gifted, I waft a dream,
While, like a spirit muffled,
I hide from the morns which stream.

Ah! do you guess this riddle?
I sang in Paradise—
Alas, I was given to meddle,
And the splendor doomed my eyes;
So thro' the spaces opal
Hither I came to dwell,
Where the forest giants topple
With the day-time night the dell !

But of my old-time Eden
I murmur and prattle on;
I moan with the night-rain driven
And rail at the star-kissed zone;
Solve ye or solve ye never—
The meaning I may not paint,
Only this: I cannot sever
My heart from this doleful plaint.

WHEN THE SNOWS COME DOWN.

WHEN the quail doth hide away
Where the banks are sunniest,
And the thrush with swelling throat
Gazes on her barren nest,
Then it is the soul doth shrink
From old Winter's lifted crown,
Held in bronzed and fleecy skies
Ere
the
snows
come
down.

Thro' the riven corn the winds
Send the husks a-fluttering,
While far down the trampled rows
I can hear the field-boy sing,
Yet I may not lag my steps
Toward the gray and spectre town,
For all nature seems austere
When
the
snows
come
down.

Long the prairie hen had hid
On the green-dressed meadow-wolds,
Now as rifle-ball is sped
To the breeze her wing unfolds,
And her undulating flight
Seems to know the season's frown,
Learned in drifted solitudes

When

the
snows
come
down.

When the snows come down!
Ah, what means it for the poor;
May the transient sun give hope,
As it creeps across the floor;—
Care for these, dear Father, do—
Bid us stay the chilling crown—
Melt with cheer the darkened pane

When

the
snows
come
down.

A LITTLE JUG OF RYE.

A LITTLE jug of rye, my dear,
A score of years its age,—
Thus mellowed in its oaken bounds;
Indeed, 'tis quite the rage
To know the choicest flavors that
The hand of Bacchus brews,—
If you don't know them—well, until
The twisters tweak your shoes.

'Tis very well to talk about
A will power stern and strong,
And lively places where the lads
At even-time may throng
Because the fireside company
Don't have the proper boost,
But do not scorn that ancient saw
How chicks come home to roost.

Remember, boys, old mamma's love
Is sweeter than the ale
That drips at last in leas of pain,
And hope drives with the gale;
Be thou in life a mariner
With clear-brained symmetry,
A striver for the heights not reared
On demijohns of rye.

A CASE IN COURT.

“JUDGE” Hobson’s court at Circle Ranch
Was called to set at three,
To try the case of old Hi Smith,
For stealing a jug of whiskey.

So in the court above the “Gem,”
With “wet stuff” close to call,
The “gray-haired sinner” of the charge
Must guiltless prove, or fall.

A jury of the prisoner’s peers
With noses of various hues,
Was sworn to weigh the “everdence”
And give to Smith his dues.

The brief complaint recited how
“Long Pete” had left a jug,
“Containin’ jest a gallion fair,”
To cheer his cabin’s mug.

Yes; swore, did Pete, he left the “licker”
Outside the “Gem,” and went to “git his
hoss,
An’ comin’ back diskivered of
His much lamented loss.

“An’ bein’ how Ol’ Hi got on
A soakin’ tear that night

An' bragged erbout a jug so cheap
The price war out o' sight,

"Twar thought by proper form of law
Ere the excitement wane,
To clear the brewing charge away,
Else add a deeper stain."

Poor Hi was not allowed to drink,
Tho' all the rest partook,
And as the crowd got fired up
The crime more vast did look.

But when the jury got the case,
To "kereful weigh each plea,"
Between their drinks they argued long
But could not quite agree;

When mightily the court rose up
With: "Git a rope that's new,
Fer as the jury seems to hang,
I'm in fer hangin' too."

IN MY DUGOUT ON THE PLATTE.

OH, I've roained the world a little
Since I left the woods back east,
And to-night I sit and ponder
On my pleasures to the least;

Like an old and weary traveler,
Full of moods and all of that,
I recall the days of flapjacks
In my dugout on the Platte.

It was just a modest dwelling
Carved into the brown hillside,
And the rude weeds of the border
Grew upon its roof and died;
Side by side, its door and window
Blinked and peeped out, oh, so pat,
From the weather-beaten visage
Of my dugout on the Platte.

There it was I first met Clarice,
And she was so wise and nice
I just up and popped the question
In the twinkle of a trice;
But she clasped a jeweled finger,
Murmured something about that—
So alone I kept things humming
In my dugout on the Platte.

In my "shack" so near to nature,
Stars above and wolves around,
I have heard far sweeter voices
Than were ever trilled in sound;

What were Astor's gold or mansions
With their turnouts, as I sat,
Coat off, proudly baking flapjacks
In my dugout on the Platte?

PRAIRIE CHICKENS "BOOMING."

How peacefully the dark-gray shadows gather!
Like a veil they shroud the earth's fair form,
And, aye, how sweetly, soothingly comes to me
A measured dirge from out yon field of corn.

A covey there of prairie chickens vespers chant
And thro' the gloaming floats their dreary
"boom,"
Grewsome as the lays the bards of old did harp
Or sing beside a fallen hero's tomb!

The cruel joy of sportsmen soon will rob
Our prairies of the grand heroic lay
I hearken to, while dusky curtains spread
Their sable garment on the bier of day.

Mayhap, as gentle stars light up the meadows
With the dim lustre of a world of peace,
The voices from the cornfield will grow fainter
And, softened by the night, soon will cease.

CUBA LIBRE.

CUBA LIBRE!

Sons of thy valiant island, thy dreams
Of freedom shall find reward;
The Spanish rule unblessed by heaven is riven,
And broken lies her Damocles sword.

Cuba Libre!

The cruel hand, long at thy throat, is loosening,
The usurer's ships no more shall tax thy toil,
And Time shall trace the fruitage of thy efforts
From blood of liberty that now wets thy soil.

Cuba Libre!

Those rare plantations shall restore their garner
And when in peace is stilled the tumult's
roar,
The sun shall rise upon new shores of freedom,
Uncursed by blighting Spain forevermore.

Cuba Libre!

Well hast thou learned the Spaniard's record,
Nor learning, sought her trail in other lands,
For Morro's guarded walls convey the story
Of skeletons shackled at feet and hands.

Cuba Libre!

And we, who have struck away forever
The chains that bound us to a blood-stained
crown,
Shall reach the hand of hope across the waters
And bid thee mock the old invader's frown.

Cuba Libre!

And bid thee, under God, restore the island
To fair fertility and budding peace,
That only come to thrill our human pulses
Where ancient tyranny hath reapt surcease.

WIPING DISHES FOR ELSIE.

“ Now this way! Oh, you goose!
Shake out that cloth! Fingers?
All fingers! For pity loose
Your grip and briskly rub
Or I, my sir, will dub
You prince of the clumsy ones! ”
Yet do I bear most patiently
This queen of ruling tongues,
For at the end when I have done my best
Her rosy cheek against my own is press’t.

OOM PAUL.

No scales have fallen from thy eyes, Oom Paul,
Like the Damascan journeyer of old,
That thou might see the blessed light arise;
For thou, in cold rebuke, hast long beheld
The scornful foot of Briton at thy door—
Hast known the bickering of her sly conceit—
Which sought to thrall in servitude the Boer,
And in his vale stamp English power complete.

Thou wise apostle of our human creed,
Patron of freedom in thy southern clime,
Our hopes are with thee, we who well have
known

A people struggling for their rights sublime;
And Irishmen and sons of Goth the world
around

Cheer the calm courage of thy farmer-folk
Whose piping guns hurl lordlings to the ground
Wrapt in their mantles of indignant smoke.

And we who broke the sod of newer lands
And know what thou wouldest dub the prairie “trek,”

Altho’ of awkward style on bended knees,
Pray God that thou mayst build on Eng-

land’s wreck!

Hail, valiant Boer! retain thy ancient skill,
Grease well the spinning ball, and let it spin;
When freemen shoot at tyrants may they fill
Their mark as hunters fill with lead a gir-
dle skin.

LIBERTY'S CRADLE SONG.

'MID the broad Pacific's bosom,
 Eastward of the China sea,
In the island home of millions,
 Rocks the cradle, Liberty.
To the song our tongues have lauded
 Where'er Yankee striving gleans,
Shall that holy cheer be stifled
 In the far-off Philippines?

Shall our fellow men uprising
 And their precious rights demand,
Find, where they expected friendship,
 Tyranny's claw-hidden hand?
To the country's honored fathers
 Can the flag keep ancient faith
If it bear the fruits of empire
 Wrapt in War's blood-figured wraith?

They who fought at Boston Harbor
 Slumber all within their graves;

Likewise they who camped with Sherman
 Sit in life's fast-closing rays.
Shall we build in stone and mortar
 Shafts to toy with every breeze,
Rocking Freedom's fattest infant,
 While we tyrannize the seas?

No; retain the olden honor,
 Out with empire-itching curs!
In the pulses of the masses
 That old fire of Justice stirs;
'Tis the leaping of the ocean
 To the Bedloe statue's sheens—
'Tis a lusty youngster cooing
 In the wave-kissed Philippines.

A LOST PLEIAD.

*Christmas Night,
1900.*

FAIR was she, and her heart was a rose—
 Pure she was, but the years have fled;
And the rue of sin in that faint heart grows
 From the ashes of petals long since dead.

THE GOSPEL OF HUMANITY.

[*NOTE.*—The writer, in conversation with a South Dakota editor whose office is a former church building, remarked, "I see you occupy a church building." "Yes," he replied pleasantly, "we are preaching the gospel—the gospel of humanity." The tho't, considering the material surroundings, seemed pertinent and suggested the stanzas below. The maker of a weekly paper on these fair prairies may indeed be a preacher of and to humanity.]

I'm not a stickler, sir, for creeds—
An atom of the universe,
I feebly shape my humble verse
And speak for man's divinest needs.
The craving of the heart and soul
For what is hidden and beyond
The ken of human mete and bound
Is not a call for prudish dole.

My gospel is to know the Will
That rightly sways this brood of men,
Thence reaching past the grave, I then
A wider purpose may fulfill;
A prism from this lower clay,
Bright in the sunbeams of that sphere
Whose visions do not disappear
Like sparks that round the anvil play.

Nor bear a special rev'rence, sir,
For forms or books of drifted lore,
Whene'er my eager thought doth soar
I've wandered not so very far.
The world no longer needs the cross—
We crucify in other guise—
The Christ with sad and lifted eyes
Is but the mem'ry of our loss!

'Tis not in planetary bournes
Amid the high-built orbit-ways—
But 'tis the sweetening of the days
And binding of the hurt that burns
Which gives our lives their small excuse
To ask for immortality—
The birth of sense beyond the sea,
When earth-hope folds its silent truce.

And so I do not pray the more,
But ask: And should I pray at all?
By praying can I thus recall
The tides that drift me from the shore?
Ah! may be with my ears alert
For all the music that's around,
My soul's religion I'll have found,
Apart from clerical expert.

The precept, then, of human need
Is all that I may practice now,
And while to age I bend my brow
It never shall bow down to creed,
So on my knees I seek not God,
But, moved by all below, above,
I find His key of endless love
Among my kindred of the sod.

LABOR AND WEALTH.

THESE two, twin sisters of our human toil,
Should have no war o'ercoming compromise,
For both depend on nature's bounteous soil,
And each to each committed stands by ties
Of mutual prosperity. Not in millennial days;
Not in the socialistic dream of slice and
slice for each,
Shall we to more propitious levels rise;
But by unwavering vigilance teach
The costly lessons of the common weal,
With worth of service heaven-high o'er gold,
And snowy fleece no more the wolf conceal,
An ang'l-gifted leader in its fold !

A QUATERNION.

I. BIRTH.

MYSTERY unapproachable! The nether flint,
The tiny grass-blade and the chaliced bud,
The oak supreme, the ocean's swarming
brood,
Beast, man,—aye, all the firmament
Nestled in formless silence, when lo!
The words were spoken: Do thou exist!
Back from the spaces fell the mist,
And it was so.

II. LIFE.

Life is the child of birth. Across its dawn
That rose-cheeked damsel, Hope, doth steal
As Age beside the cradled bower doth kneel,
And each intruding shadow is withdrawn,
But only for a season. Life is a struggle.
Who could deem it less were dull indeed;
More often, too, the kindest soul must
bleed,
And joy we smuggle.

III. DEATH.

Death is a lily-arbored door, a quiet keep,
A chamber with white curtains draping low,

A bold divide where never melts the snow;
Yet 'tis a loving and a lovely sleep.
Vigil of the inverted plume, thy tyranny
Is but a gladsome privilege in mask—
We lift our eyes, and oh! our lips do ask
For something o'er the sea.

IV. ETERNITY.

Death is so mute, but still it hath a dream
Of waking. Our mortal visions of the night
How oft prove vain when flooding light
Doth touch them with its beam;
But that last dream no human thought need
rue,
For when the raptured hearts at length
shall rise
To view the meadows vast of Paradise,
They'll know 'twas true!

THE DREAM IMMORTAL.

So long have poets sung this theme
Of themes; so long thro' gates of mortal
yearning
Hath thought sped out, winged with the hope
Ungained, but ceaseless burning.
Do these still waters mark the boundary
Of mind, and conscious being's sphere?

Do these white sails that guide the souls of men
Sink down at last to nevermore appear?

Shall friends strike hands again,
Repeating stories of the earth-life and the
passage hence,
Or shall old faces all be changed and new—
Unrecognized, mayhap?—a kind defense
'Gainst treasured feuds, and memories
Exiled from joy! Does death end all?
Ah! bid us wish that death, indeed, does spill
Within its silence the bitterness; but all?

Nay, let us not believe it so,
But rather that the pillow'd vault we see
Gets but its own, and God claims His—
When, how, from whence, 'tis He
Alone may know; our part to wait
And watch the dawn, till morning's rife
Scatters these prison bars, and golden light
Brings us the tokens of a broader life!

TO AN INVISIBLE FRIEND.

Dost thou, amongst the forms which silent
grew,
Wrapt in the pale garmentings of death,

That never loose their flesh-corroding hold
From morn till morn — dost think of me?

And from the shallowness of this puny life
Freed evermore, dost, thinking, pity me, thy
friend,
Compelled to touch the earth with hands
Which yearn to lie in thine and know the
truth?

Voidness and bitterness like desert peaks
Girt on the vision of my plodding days,
While only that thin fabric keepest me
From Love's evolving planet-field of mind!

Oh! when my feet come down the narrow aisle
And seek thee in the garden-lands of God,
Amid the high-hedged, flowering banks
Where secret thorns find no abiding place;

Then wilt thou meet me at the spirit-gate —
Then wilt thou kiss the earth-lines from my
brow —
And thou, my transient friend, my memory,
Wilt glorify me even as thou art.

TWICE AT CHURCH.

I saw her in the church, I saw her lean
O'er the coffin of him she loved in death;
He who had caressed in manly pride
Those tear-wet cheeks. Alas! the breath
Of that great Gatherer had fallen on him—
On John; and she so brief a wife! I sighed
As o'er a personal loss that dark spring morn
When he, poor John, had died.

In that same church again I saw her,
And then I stole out, seeking the solitude
Of harvest-fields—the church was crowded so!
One cannot think amid a multitude;
And I—I wished to think of John,
All by myself at the hushed noon,
Wondering if he'd have cared—cared
To have been there and have known.

I saw her in the church, and she
More beautiful, methought, than ever;
She who had mourned for John, dear John,
A six months gone—she who could never,
Nevermore be happy! I saw her in the church,
She I had pitied so when he had died—
Others had pitied, too, but at the altar-rail
She stood to-day, a timid, radiant bride.

HUMANITY AND THE SEA.

How like the sea, the far expanse
That beats against a thousand strands,
Breathing its husky monotone,
Lifting its spray-wet hands,
Is our humanity.

Alike the restless billows we raise our hearts
To cry through pain's wild night;
But o'er the waters of the tossing years
Seemeth to break no cheering light
On our humanity.

We yearn for distant climes,
Where green palmettoes wait,
But still strive on; 'tis well, ah, well,
Though time grows over-late
For our humanity.

While yet the sternest voyage is before,
No skillful seaman seemeth near at hand
To note the needle's variation there
As we depart from sunset lands
Away from humanity.

But high above the flood shineth
A golden star, which marks the track

To shape our course, and, on the farther shore,
A pilot waiteth; would we come back
To wear humanity?

Would we return when once that pilot greet-
eth us?

Ah, would we murmur at the kind decree
At Death, and our lone journeying thitherward,
When on that summer shore we're free!
we're free!

From our humanity?

A MAN.

[INSCRIBED TO E. E. C.]

A son of the West,
Bare-footed in his youth,
He did his best
Deep-seeking for the truth.
Deep-nighted lamps
Shone on his brow,
The morning damps
Clung to his plow.
Thy lesson, youth, is here,--
Feet with the summer tan
May win ambition dear.
Behold this man!

A SONG TO THE NAMELESS.

THERE are singers enough for the lofty
On Ambition's exclusive plain,
My lay is for the lowly—
For the heroes without a name—
For they whose souls are smouldering
In disappointment's fire,
Who never may know the sweet and the glow
Of the stations to which they aspire.

My song is framed for the mother
Who moves in a temple of toil,
And for the gentle father
Whose sinews live in the soil.
In the history and lore of a nation
The deeds of the brilliant are wrought
With flaming pen, the food for men
Whose lessons are dearly bought.

I know in the windowless garrets
And the sod-roofed pioneer "shacks"
Are some whose tables are scanty,
Threadbare the coats on their backs;
With ever a feeling respectful
For the being who wins the prize,
My harp is strung for the nameless
Whose work obscurely dies.

The deeds that in life passed unnoticed
May flash when the day is done,
We can never know whose victory
Is most deservedly won—
There are slaves enough to pamper
The dwellers in lordly halls,
In the path of the sad and lonely
The flower of my sentiment falls.

A BED-TIME IDYL.

I THREATENED her with punishment
And oh, such dire calamities,
If she did not full soon
Close up her roguish eyes
And go right straight to sleep;
But when at last of rompings,
Somersaults and pranks
Her jolly heart had tired,
And lisping, it meseemed, half-thanks
Because I did not keep
Troth with my threats, her chubby hand
Fell clumsily across her brow,
The eyelids drooped beneath their load of
dreams,
And all her childish prattle was at rest,
I felt the knave and coward in my soul
For what now seemed the cruelty of power.

MY WEE COMMANDER.

So, my beloved, art thou bent on ruling
Ere yet thine hand can guide itself aright?
Child, where didst thou get this precious
schooling,
That in thy weakness gives thee greater
might?

Those ruby fingers wave a quick-spun order,
Subtle of language, though no word convey;
Ah, Beulah, dost thou honor thus thy father,
Dost count the ancient law but fairy play?

Now in a truer light I understand;
The while, in glee, we're romping here together
The chubby shall confuse the sinewy hand
And give its tenor to domestic weather.

For on these cherry lips are clustered mandates;
Thou art indeed a sure yet cute commander,
And I, a votary, who in promptness waits
The whim and caprice of an Alexander.

Nay, nay, a Joan of Arc; I have misspoken;
And hast thou dreams like to thy predecessor!

Forsooth, I half believe thy looks betoken
My certain need for artful intercessor.

So to thy shrine I'll bring no idle punning,
Lest from those limpid eyes, like mountain
pools,
Mysterious and deep, are outlets running
To sprinkle me, the prince of grown-up fools.

But still, meseemeth, could I ever cherish
Thy wee sweet presence, I had greater lease
From life's dull prairies, where my fancies
perish,
Far from love's garden-lands and palms of
peace.

Yet, while I may, I'll clasp thee fondly;
Dear heart, sweet heart, bye-bye, and sleep.
When I am taken, or thou goest, surely
A wiser Father's care will guide and keep.

CHILD QUERIES.

How like the children at their play,
Intent with shams and make-believe,
Aloft with joy, or, sulking, grieve,
Is this, the fulness of our day.



Oh, long we seek the recompense
Of puny things which flit us by,
While all the wondrous sweep of sky
With rosy hope invites us hence!

How like the youngsters weary grown
We hide away in shadowed nook
And half in slumber upward look
To where the planet-fields are sown;
And mute with musing there the while—
An entity of small degree—
Lisp, “ Father, dost thou care for me,
Mindful of teardrop, or of smile?”

And so we stronger infants creep
Out to the borders of the blue,
And feebly call, as babies do,
From restless interludes of sleep.
So while the earthly parent bends
Above the tiny dreamer’s cot,
Shall void remain the larger’s lot,
At noontide, or when striving ends!

Ah, is it not our part to trust
That thro’ the dusk of even’s pall
A Father’s ear may note our call—
A Father who is kind and just—
And who will come as mothers fond,
Touching the brow with mild caress,
Proving a love none may express
Ere death has lifted up its wand ?

RIVIERA.

RIVIERA, and must thou, too, be given o'er
To Freedom's altar? Shall that red blade,
Dripping with unnumbered heroes' blood,
Add thine to Maceo's, and yet not paid
Th' price of liberty? Oh, may some tongue
Braver than yet is heard, plead, if it must,
Until this land shall move, as by God's will,
To hurl the tyrant's shackles in the dust
Before rebuking Right! But if it be
That thou must die, ere men will understand,
Across thy grave let martyred Justice sweep
With careless robe and fierce, unswerving hand
To rid prostrated Cuba, soul and limb,
From Spain's black grip and hellish avarice!

TO A DISABLED LARK.

O, TIMID guest of Summers undefiled,
Compelled to linger thus a ward of Win-
ter's wrath—
Here in this snowy cleft alone,
Whereunto flower-climes send no perfumed
breath.
Thy drooping wing, sweet bird, did fail thee
cruelly;

Then, when the changing leaf fell to the earth,
For thou didst so desire to join the throng
That sped to where spring clingeth to its birth.

Yet, art thou stranded, hapless thing—
The prey of lashing blizzards, and the chill?
Oh, do the dreams of meadowed fields invade
Th' white-robed solitude, and visions fill?

Aye, shall I ever thus, exiled and far,
Unknown of friends and kin forevermore,
In teeming space lift up my eyes, yet see
Naught but the windings of a friendless shore?

AN IDEAL.

I'LL worship beauty, ran a poet's thought;
Rare tints and colorings and grace shall win
My utmost praise; words shall be quick
To lend a gracious touch and rounded favor
To the seal that loveliness proclaims,
Uncounted shall life's drabs and plainness be—
Worthy of earth, indeed, they are,
But void of loftier gift, may not demand
The adoration of my willing pen!

But when on distant shores he stricken lay,
Helpless and sick where only strangers came,
And by his couch an aged woman knelt,
From whom all youthful beauty was effaced,
And who did gently bathe the sufferer's brow—
Speaking as mother-love alone suggests—
The poet put away his old resolve,
And found eternal beauty in that face.

THE DAY.

'Tis not to-day we live for, not to-day—
It is some other day beyond, beyond—
It is some hope behind the dawn, my dear—
A yearning more than earthly fond.
Th' minutes fly, the hours are with them, too;
Th' light comes up and then withdraws its
ray;
A storm broods o'er the earlier dome of blue,
And oh, we sigh, to-day! 'tis not to-day.

Some dream, some place, some love,
Th' heart had sought of others fair,
But ruder hands have torn the prize away;
Yet still we follow with this gift of care
That is a benediction after all. Who knows,
When life is registered from tabs that play

The daily round of comedy and tears, whose
hand
Shall find the rarest need of day?

'Tis not to-day, dear, not to-day,
Affection sees a shore beyond the sea—
Beyond the little toils and joys that wear
Th' present crown, the soul shall flee
To find its wish—its God—altho'
We may not drowse, but seek the way
Across the prairies of this world, my dear,
Until, brave runners, we have found the Day!

TO A UNIVERSITY GIRL.

ORCHARD tints are in thy cheeks,
O, thou gushing creature!
Yet, in half-a-dozen weeks
Thou wilt wed a preacher.
Faith, the cloth I now despise—
Who could be less valiant,
For in dreams of paradise
Would I bask, thy gallant.

"NO POCKETS IN A SHROUD."

[The lines appended were suggested by reading the news despatches touching the recent demise of Marcus Daly, the "Montana Copper King." Deceased had been completing a magnificent mansion on Fifth Avenue, New York, but his dying eyes were not permitted to view it. The call came, and, like a beggar unattended, he crossed the invisible summit and left his twenty millions floating on the tides of time. The concept of the poem is original, but the title aphorism, of course, is not.]

THERE is power and wealth in plenty
For those who scheme and dig.
Some boast a million at twenty
Hanging from fortune's twig;
There is a dream, and losing
Or gaining, for poor or proud,
But with or without the choosing,
No pockets deck the shroud !

Far amid ocean's by-ways
You may win a royal store,
Or on vast inter-highways
Probe deep mines to their core;
But a little hymn at parting,
O'er the echo of turf and clod,—
Twill be the same as at starting;
No pockets in a shroud !

If you feed like swine on garbage,
In quest of a bursting purse,
Some other hand will ravage
When you slide from the sombre hearse;
And oft one who sweat not in winning
Will dazzle the gaping crowd
With the swell of his peerless sinning,
When you lie in your plain white shroud.

It pays to be open-hearted
And give, when you can, a boost,
For, with the light departed,
Our chickens come home to roost;
While unto us all there speaketh
A voice more stern than loud:
Failure to him who seeketh
The pockets in his shroud.

Ashes in place of pockets,
Rusting and wasting bone,
Dazzle and pomp, burnt rockets
That never could back a loan;
Live for life's truth and beauty,
Riches by love endowed,
For God hath not read his duty
Thro' pockets in a shroud !

IN FLOWERLAND.

[In memory of little Eva Lagan, who died April 23rd, 1900, at the home of her parents in Yankton].

DEAR heart, fair heart, thy tiny hands
Now clasp God's fancies infinite
Afar from life's uncertain strands
In meadows of the firmament;
The Shepherd Christ leads thee to-day—
One of the countless cherub throng
Whose feet have passed the silent spray,
Whose lips take up love's holiest song.

Dear heart, sweet heart, to drift away,
When angels from the skies allure
To fields where lambs elysian play,
Makes not thy soul more light and pure;
That could not be, since they who knew
The purity which hedged thee round
Yet will believe that amidst the blue
No stain on fingers wee was found.

The little mound where thou dost rest
Will know the wind-kisst blooms of spring,
And He who doeth all things best
Will sooth the finite plaint and sting
Until they, too, that bridge shall reach,
Erected by divinest art,

And clasp thee while thy sweet lips teach
Those heavenly paths, dear heart, sweet
heart!

THE SPANIARD'S TRAIL.

SONS of the free-born West, thy brothers sleep
Where throbbing tides kiss valiant Cuba's
shore ;
The heavy requiems of the ocean keep
In murky clasp the flutt'ring flag they bore.
Shall strong Columbia, pride of people all,
Forget the Maine, and with a passing tear
Ignore her crew—no patriot call
To teach the treacherous dons that ere the
year
Hath found an end their slavish thrall,
Like some black octopus, shall lifted be
from Cuba?

Why must that isle bow down to tyrant Spain?
Why should in Morro's dungeons, chained
to walls,
Decay and die true Cubans, and by the stain
Of freedom-given blood, that only calls
On God to witness, confirm the Spanish tale
Of booted plunder thro' four centuries?

How like a serpent's course hath been her trail
In the new world wherever peaceful seas
Had been! The shadow still is on brave Cuba!

As sank the Maine by plotted treachery,
So, too, shall sink in night Spain's craven
power—
Fit trophy for oblivion's mornless sea.
This is the day indeed, and now the hour;
Then let us clasp our struggling sister's hand,
While brazen throats declare the oppressor's
doom—
Not for rude slaughter, as we bear the wand
Of progress onward, and write on Castile's
tomb:
The child of thy debasement—Cuba—'s free!

FOUNDER OF THE TOWN.

(TO E. B. W.)

THESE were the hands that piled the logs in
place,
The ridge-pole and the rafters knew his care
Of the first dwelling on this prairie waste.
Behold these streets and mansions now so
fair!

A DAKOTA MAN.

HE was a man, a true Dakotan;
In seventy his breaker tore the sod,
And with his hands he patiently
Heaped the stiff prairie ribbons
Into wall-like forms, until behold !
A dugout blossomed on the dreary waste,—
A home where children should be born
To bless and be a blessing. He,
Moved by a sense of inate duty,
Scarce had dreamed that unto him,
Or such as he, was the far call
Of destiny. How could he, with his toils
And myriad cares, a factor deem himself
In the great race of progress? His part
It was to lowly plan and build
For those he loved and who loved him.
This was his thought. The world
Shall have no better. For he who lays
With patient, humble will his heart
Within his work because he loves
And guards his own in tenderness,
Must needs love all his kind.
Thus unto him the State will ever turn,
If in the stress of time she needs a friend
To bring her back to moorings safe and clear
And set her sails more strongly for the storms.

THE PRINTING PRESS AND PROGRESS.

[Greeting to the Dakota Republican on its thirty-eighth birthday.]

A CHRONICLER

Of treasured lore must seem thy lot,
As standing now so close to four decades
Ye con the past. Two thousand gifts to time
Doth mark the tally of thy rounded weeks.
Within thy scope, this realm beyond the Sioux
Hath yielded from its virgin depths the cheer
That swells the soul of husbandry with pride.
So, too, these prairie homes have shown
The quality of steadfast faith, when gloomed
The settler's door the living clouds at noon,
And wrench'd the heart-strings with an awful
fear;
Yet from that shadow did Dakota rise
And less than forty years doth tell the tale.

The turf-crowned shack—rude child of mem-
ory—

Once echoed with thy mirth, and I assume
Thy ample pages may have balked
The wild-eyed blizzard in its cunning search
For cracks and crannies. If so it be,
Who scoffs? Doth not great Shakespeare tell us

Cæsar's dust may serve as mute a purpose?
Thus hath thy pages fair kept goodly tab
On old Dakota's struggles. O whirling press!
No slave blood wets the soil where thou art
 free;
No people sleeps where thy quick song is heard.
And so we pray that fearless hands may guide
The chiming shuttle of thy clarion power;
For on these western plains shall rise,
I full believe, that splendid kingdom that the
 dreamers say
Can only find a place in distant stars.

WHAT IS IT TO BE FREE?

Is it youth's golden hour of romp and laughter,
 Quick to depart;
The dew of life's dark wine a-brewing,
 A season of artless art?

Is it the slave's harsh bonds asunder riven
 By blood of many a field;
The boon his blinded brother would deny him,
 With fetters sealed ?

Is it the thrill the captive's breast awakens
 When bolts are turned ;

The rosy dreams illusive sleep doth beckon,
The cold cell spurned ?

Is it the spirit's here-undreamed-of pleasure,
When shadows flee;
Is it the sparkling diadem awaiting
O'er night's unfathomed sea?

The questions rise and fall with idle murmur;
We scarce can know
Whether our highest freedom is in serving
God's plan below.

Or, turning from these transitory breakers
And burdened flee
To meadows where the daisies may not wither:
What is it to be free?

WINTERGREEN IN A LETTER.

O FRAGRANT greeting from the woody shades,
So green thy leaves and red thy berries are!
Fresh rise my yearnings for those childhood
glades
That nurtured thee for one who wander'd
far.



A SWEDE WALTON.

THERE's a big Swedish fellow, I'll not tell his name,

But if I should do so, you'd know it,
Who's a knight of the bob and the reel-spinning cane,

And isn't concerned if he shows it.
While others all fruitless are swinging the bait

And fuming o'er luckless processes,
That the upward ascent of the beauties belate

From the depths of the swimming recesses,
This bluff-fisted scion from Oscar's domain

Complacent his arts doth employ,
And thus runs the style of his gentle refrain:

“ String these fish, there's another ahoy! ”
A twirl of his wrist, or some other device,

Seems to rob the plump tribe of its cunning;
Like the heathen Chinee's, all his plays in a trice

Are worked, while the others are sunning.

ALONG THE BRULE.

THO' distant peaks my tho'ts imbue,
Or flow'ry gulch and coulee,
My exile soon wouldest know its rue
For roaming from the Brule.

MY MOTHER'S EYES.

[Earliest Verses.]

EYES that fondly dropped their tears
 On my face when earth was new,
Sweetly watch through all the years
 Tho' fate seems dark and friends are few.

Last to meet my own at night,
 First to greet them in the morn
When the morrow warm and bright
 Echoes forth the breakfast horn.

Eyes that on me fondly rest
 As I kneel beside her knee;
Mother's smile of all the best,
 Tender words it speaks to me.

Eyes that utter more than word,
 As from tender care I go,
Claimed by earth's departing herd
 In its journey here below.

Smiling 'neath an ashy brow
 Covered o'er with silver hair,
Calmed by Heaven's promise now
 In its endless visions fair.

See as little children see,
 Death alone can claim their soul,—

Memory'll paint them fresh for me
On life's endless, glittering scroll.

Closed beneath a coffin's lid,
Which is stained with loving tears,
All life's cares and sorrows hid,—
Sleep without the dreamer's fears.

Ope'd in Heaven's golden light,
Nevermore on me to fall,
Till my own have lost their sight,
And reopened by God's call.

THE "LONE TREE."

[A few miles northeast of Elk Point, not far from the Big Sioux, stands a lone cottonwood tree. It is quite apart from any growth of timber. In earlier days it was a notable landmark on the government road.]

Ah! many seasons thou hast stood
The brunt of winter's icy wrath;
And smoky summer's drouthy breath
Has gnarled and knotted in thy wood.

The warring Sioux in council met
Within thy far-extended shade;
Stealing away, bent on the raid
That left the ground with crimson wet.

The coyote capered round thy bole
And rent the air with plaintive cry;
Thy weaving boughs returned the sigh
Of the unfed and famished soul.

And prairie fire's mad stampede
Swept by, but left the grimy bark
Fair for the flinted arrow's mark,
Whose wound thou scarce might heed.

The Saxon's footsteps have been felt,
His hand hath built, and nobly, too;
Strange his ax hath not sought you
The frost upon the pane to melt.

I trust his stroke may long delay
In severing thy span of time,
And let the season's wordless rhyme
Among thy saintly branches play!

DAKOTA BOYS IN LINE.

THE papers that hev cum to-day
Don't say no bad uv you—
The worthy sons of sires who fit
In uniforms uv blue;
An' when we read the list, boys,
Uv killed an' wounded men,

We walked around the room, boys,
An' read the thing again.

They ain't no shootin' here, boys,
Exceptin' shootin' pains,
As keeps a pinchin' at our hearts,
An' dartin' thro' our brains;—
You'll have tu overlook it, boys,
Fer life is kinder vain
Sense them dispatches cum, boys,
A tellin' uv the slain.

They ain't no frost on Frost here,
Ner eny uv the rest;
We've known Dakoty boys these years—
Each one 'll do his best;
An' them that air thro' doin'—
God bless them in that worl'
Whar savage islands air not,
Ner savage shrapnel whirl !

We ain't no great on style, boys,
An' don't know much of war—
Not half as much as you do
Whar bullets rip the air;
But you're uv us, we claim you,
We yearn your manly tread,
An' when ye cum we'll prove it,
Fergettin' not the dead.

A BALD-HEADED MAN.

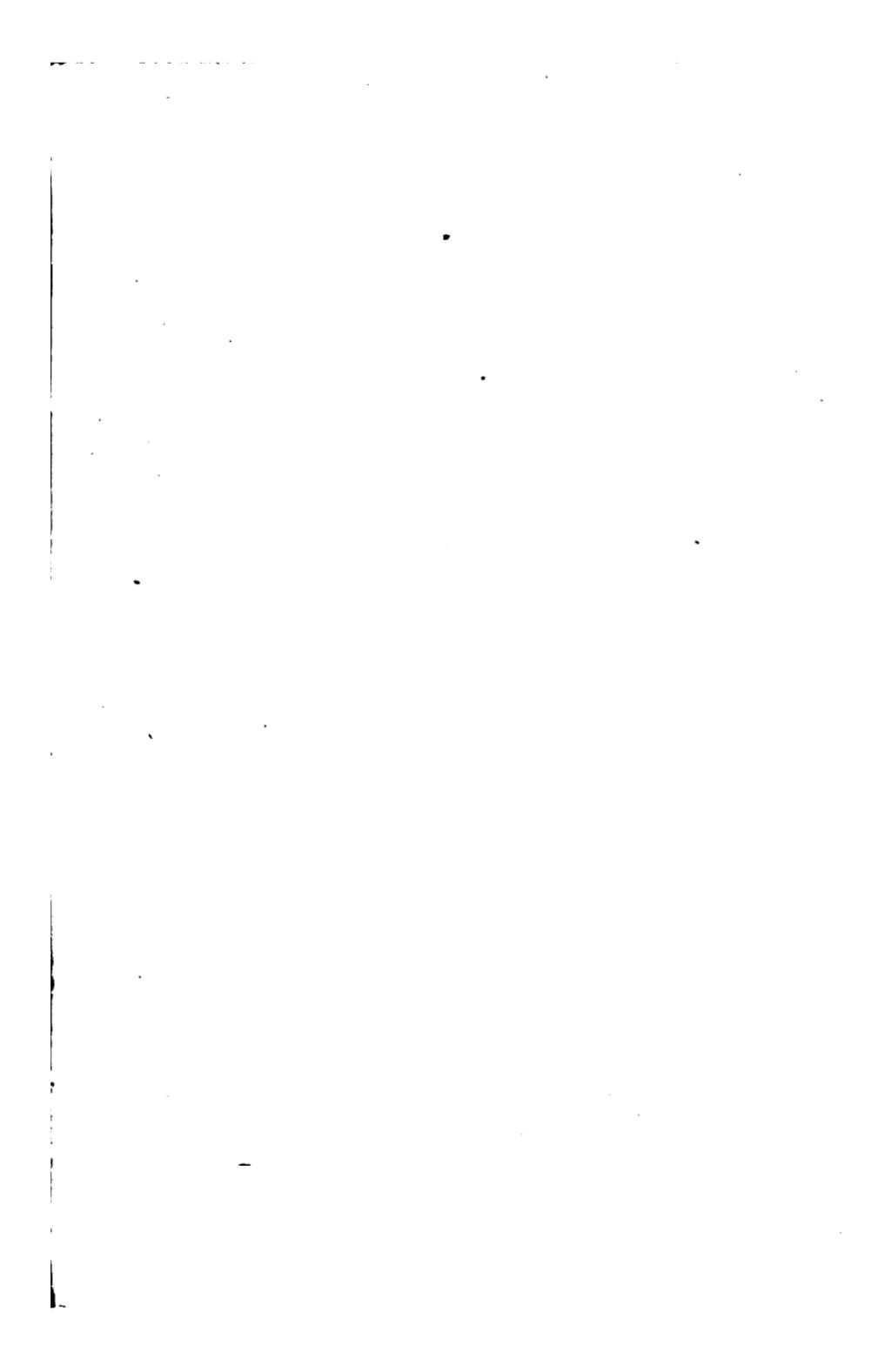
A BALD-HEADED man!
His shining dome of mind
High and serene it was,
With learning's wreath entwined.
Shakespearean seemed that temple!
Prophet of man's broad ken!
What are his tho'ts' confines?
Narrow. He's in the pen.

GOIN' TO THE FAIR.

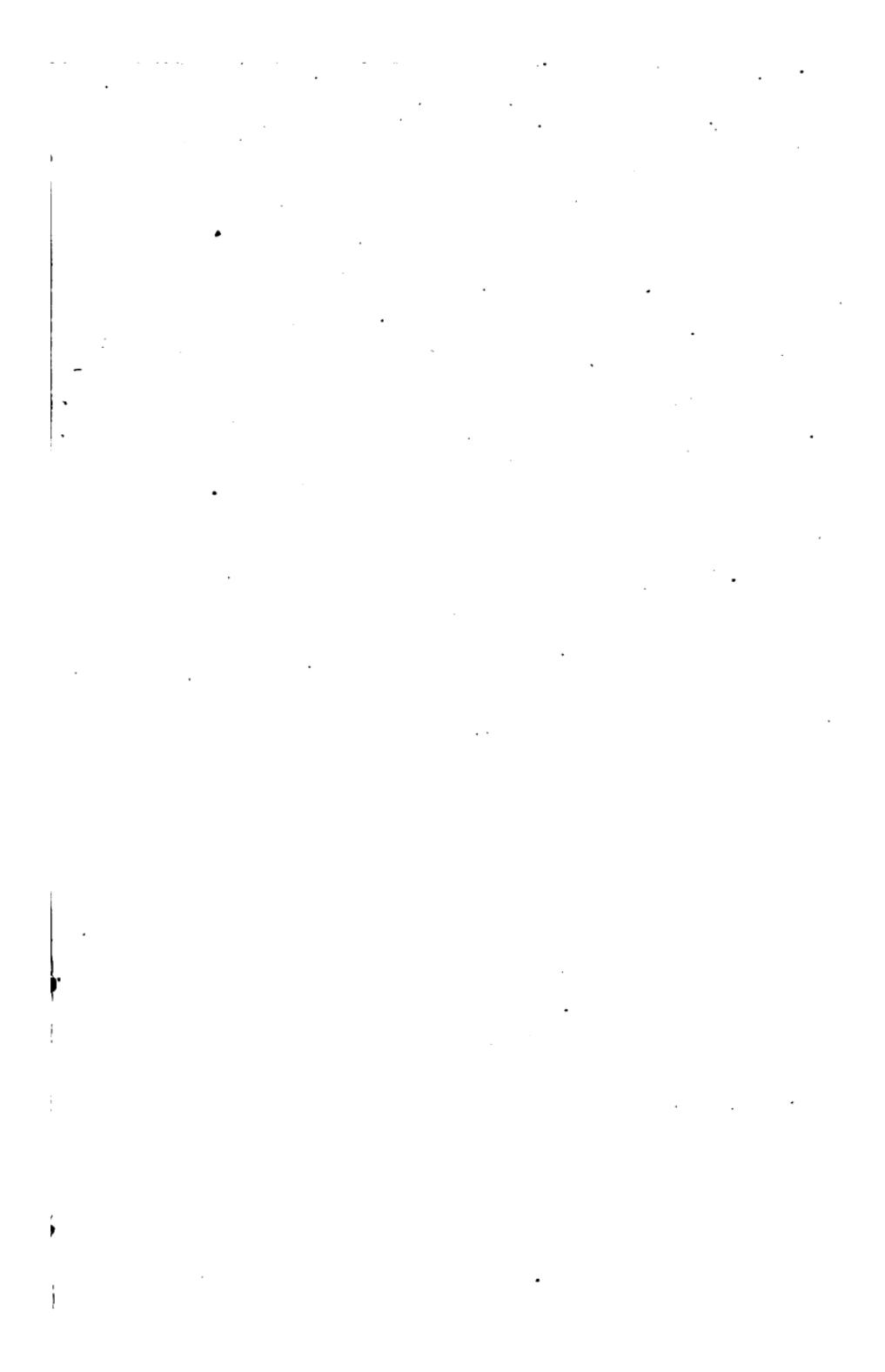
GOSH! them county fair's jist the thing
Tu set a feller right, an' bring
Out the jandice of discontent that keeps
Dingin' a chap tu move an' never sleeps
Frum its pesterin' till you up an' sling
On yer biled toggery, an' jes' bring
The hull fambly with ye, then an' there,
Tu see the sights at the old fair.

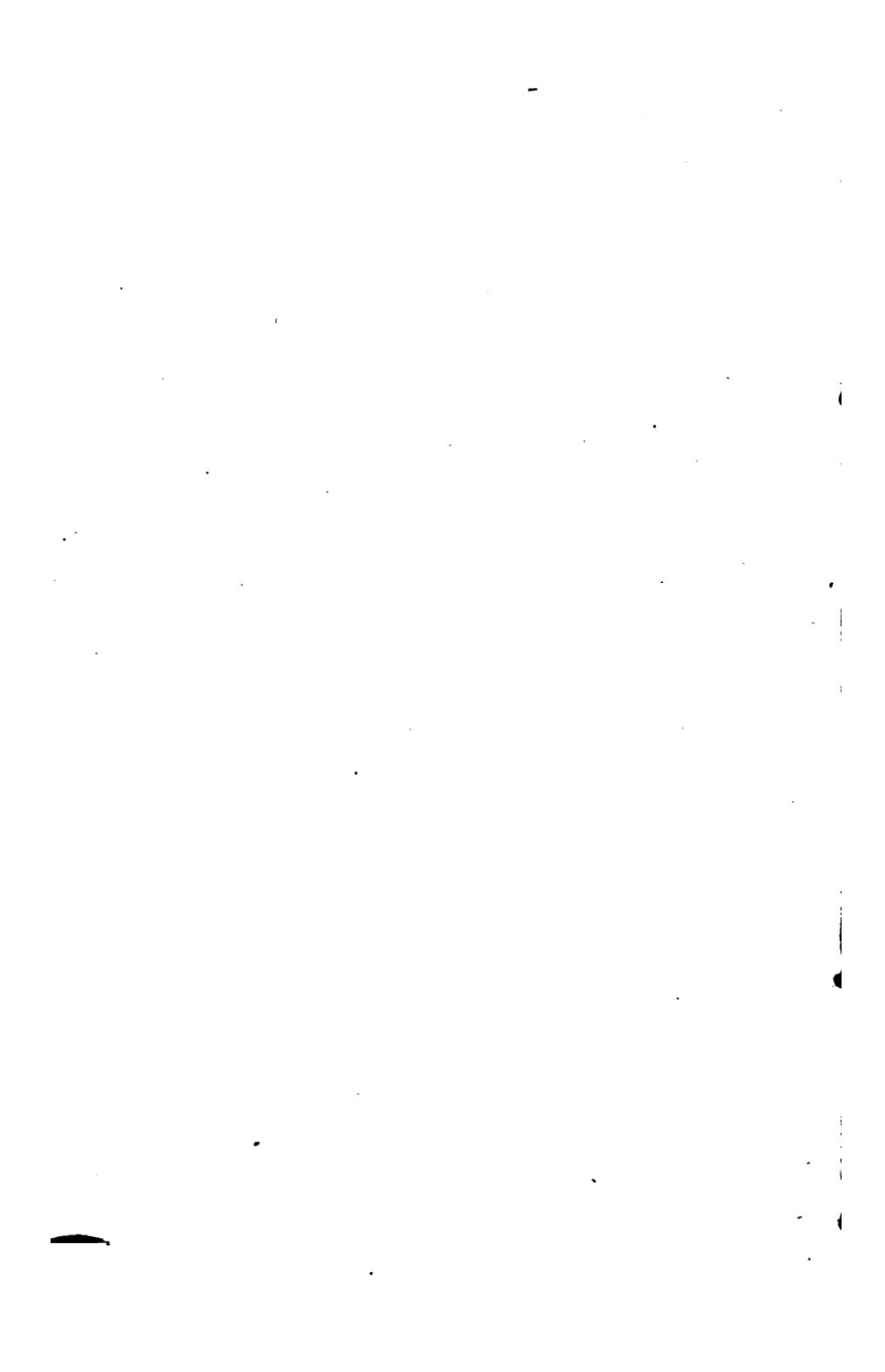
Wa'al, d'ye ever see the likes of them
Air punkins an' squashes! an'—hem!
'Taters! Peachblows, I reckon; an' corn!
By jucks! I never since I 's born

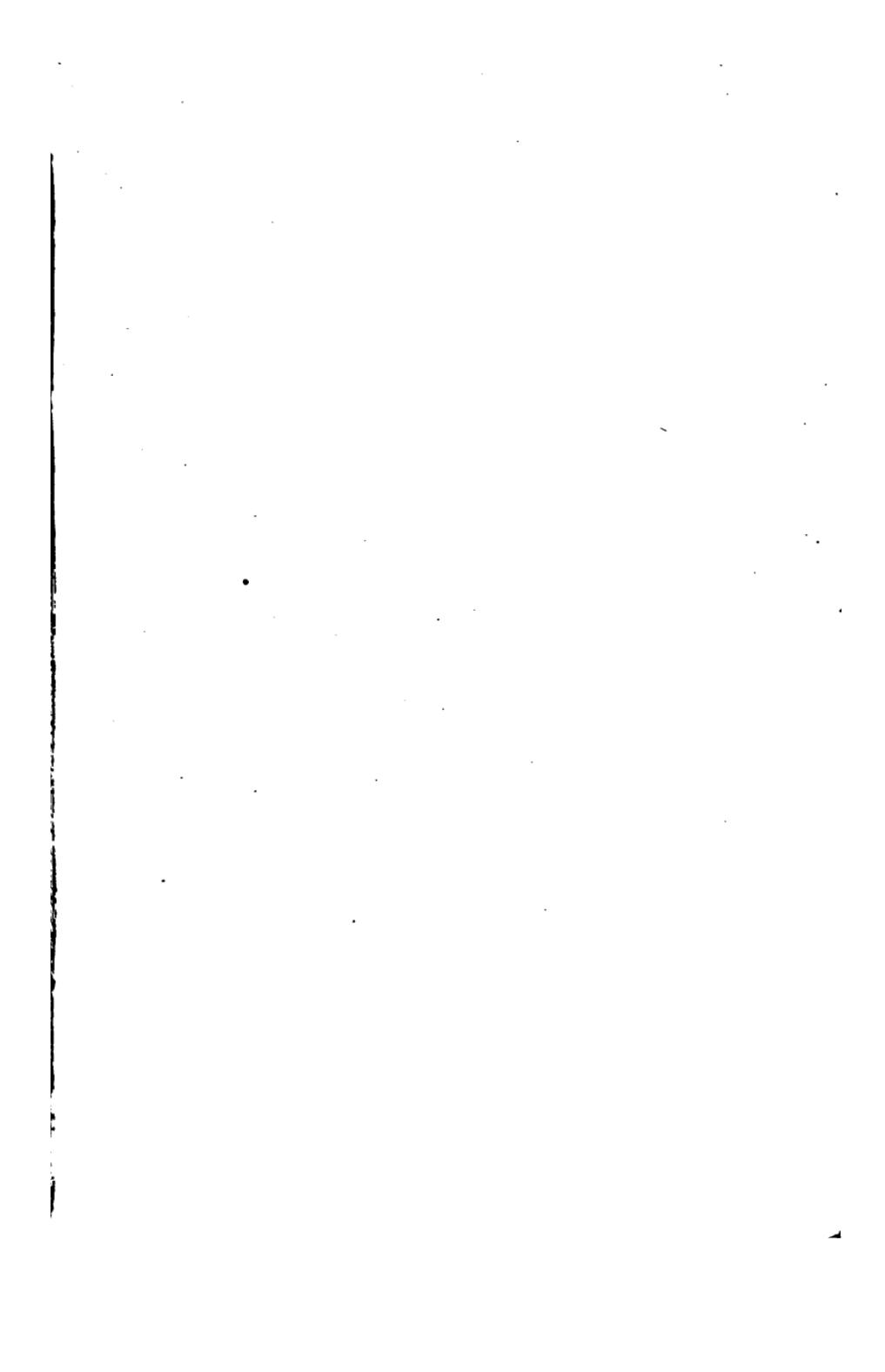
Run onto ears like them—raised on sod, too,
The boss here says, an' it's true,
'Cause Hank Checkrow seen 'em plant it,
An' Hank he ain't no hand tu fergit.
Down tu the fair you can see fer a "nick"
The hairy man captured by Dewey; and Dick
Smith he got a cane fer seventy-five cents
Thet the feller sed cum from Transvaal, er
hence
Thar somewhere; an' goodness! thet trained
bear!
Golly! how he rassled fer the fair!
An' Ellen May Sniffin, who's ingaged, zounds!
Want she purty on the merry-go-rounds!
Her intended an' her rid the wooden hosses
An' did their best tu make good the feller's
losses
On account uv rain, an' the steep price
Fer bein' 'lowed to run the tarnal thing; twice
More'n twas wuth, he sed. Thet night
When I got hum, an' out o' them measly tight
Shoes, I did the chores an' went tu bed,
An' flashin's of yaller, green an' red
With awful rackets, all readys! an' screams
Went whizzin like fly-time thro' my dreams;
But jest the same I'll be thar
If next year they have a fair.

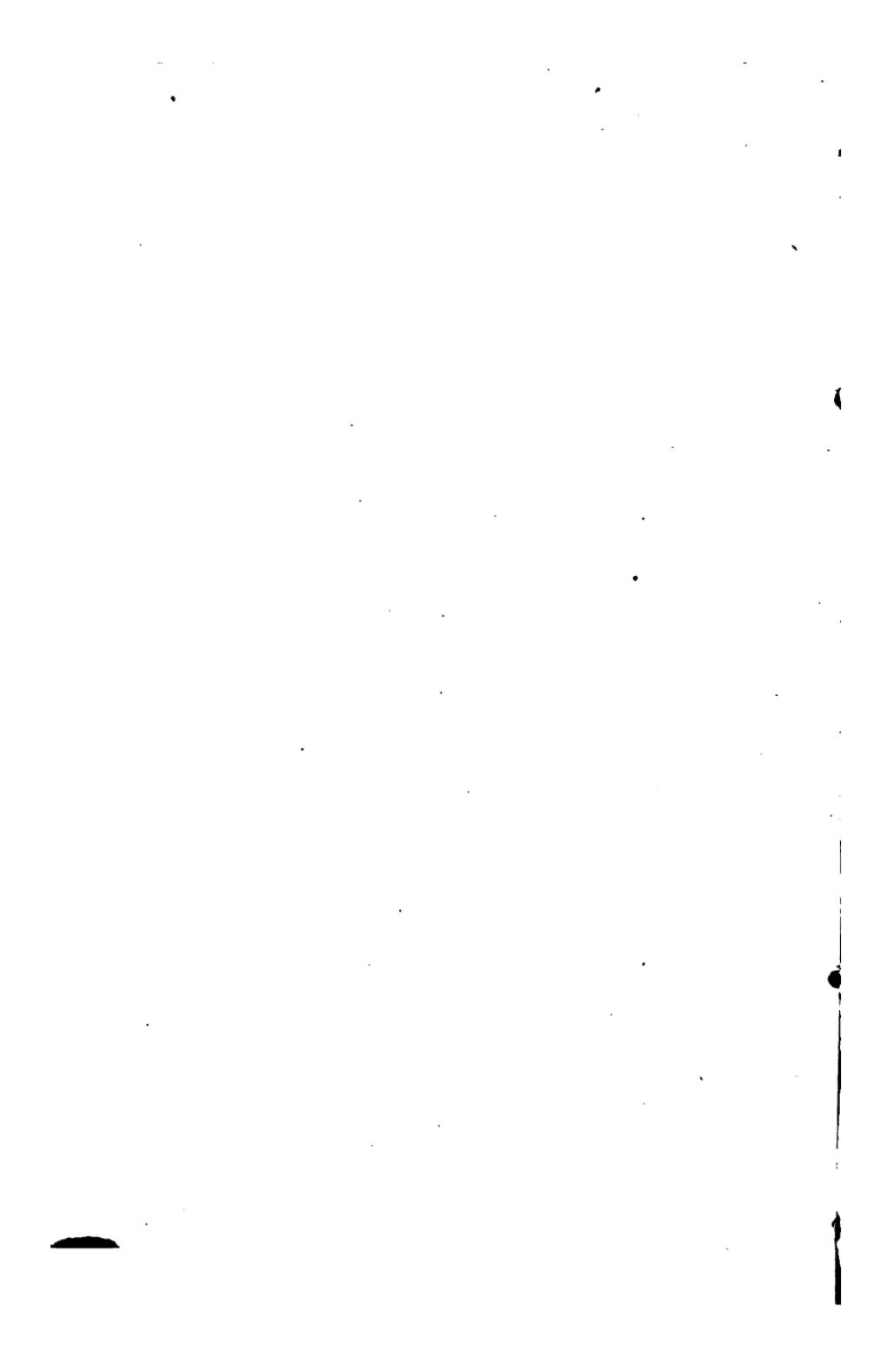












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